

Chronicles of Christopher Columbus

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DEDICATION.

TO THE REV. JOHN HAMILTON THOM.

To you, dear friend, who through my ripening youth,
My listening soul with Life's true Waters fed ;
Whose learned culture fired ; whose onward tread,
Firm and inspired beneath the light of truth,
Woke in me loving reverence ; whose kind heart
Gave through those years and gives me still a great
Good gift of friendship : here I dedicate
This late fruit of a long beloved art.
More than three years ago to you I brought
Its earliest opened blossoms, doomed to know
No further flower or fruitage, but the glow
Of that kind praise you gave, like sunshine wrought
On the yet folded buds ; and now to you
I bring the gathered fruit—my labour done :
If not unworthy of some praise, to none
More than yourself the offering is due.

1882

M. D.

PREFACE.

THE historical facts which form the main narrative of the following poem, first published in 1882, were selected from *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* by Washington Irving, with some assistance from Prescott's *History of Ferdinand and Isabella*. The considerable assistance afforded me by Mr. Irving's sympathetic appreciation of the character of Columbus, and of the poetic interest and picturesqueness of many points in his history, I here most gratefully acknowledge.

The attitude of the young Genoese as described on page 8, was suggested by a photograph of Signor Monteverdè's beautiful and spirited statue "Le prime Isperazione di Cristofero Colombo."

The duet of the Portuguese sailors was suggested by a passage in *Travels in Portugal*, by John Latouchè; the tale of Noah by a legend in Lady Jackson's *Fair Lusitania*.

I have given the date of Columbus' birth as 1435 or thereabouts, according to Irving's view that he was 70 at the time of his death, and he certainly died A.D. 1506.

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CHRONICLES
OF
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

CANTO I.

BOYHOOD.

SLOW heaves the water by the massive pier,
The fishers' boats sway slowly to and fro ;
The terraced city circles round the bay—
Genoa, surnamed The Proud.

Around the port her warehouses are ranged,
Lofty, full stored ; her arsenal, her towers ;
Westward the ancient ramparts and the cliffs ;
San Giorgio's Bank, the Porto Franco east ;
And the Old Mole protecting half the port.
Above and yet above, still circle round
The grim barred windows of her palaces,

Her churches and dark cypresses ; beyond,
The hills and barren mountains.

Autumn shines and glows on all. About the har-
bour ride

Tall armed ships, the servants and defence
Of Genoa's princely commerce ; here and there
Are lesser craft and boats. In one of these,
Leaning against the bows, a dreaming boy
Fixes grey eyes upon the glittering wave ;
The light reflected flickers on his face,
White-browed but freckled by the summer sun,
His ruddy cheeks embrowned, and loose fair curls.
The ships are swaying slowly up and down,
The water heaves against the massive Mole :
He sees no more of water or of ship
Than one born blind ; he hears no more of all
The city's many noises, and the loud
Perpetual bustle on the quays and piers
Than one born deaf ; his spirit roves afar,
Picturing future dangers ; glows with hopes
Of glorious conquests, and great services
To Christ and the true Faith in heathen lands,
Of his achievement. In his hand the sword
Should be Cross-bearing even as his own name
Signifies bearing Christ ; and he should find

In doing those achievements, unknown lands
And strange adventures, and the wondrous sights
Of which old mariners tell him thrilling tales,
Tales that are echoes from the mystic times
Before the old Greek poets, who maintained
Incredible things, yet told them with such faith
And in such music that no human heart
But must believe them half, and feel the grace
Lingering on modern lands whose names yet bear
The fragrance of those fables : as Hesperia,
Mycæne, Calydon, Thessalia, Tempé,
Arcadia, Atalantis, Avalon ;
In later times the wonderful Cathay—
Land of delightful flowers and wondrous fruits,
Birds of imperial plumage, precious gums,
Spices and amber, and mysterious gems ;
And gentle natives graceful beyond thought,
Who should receive the Gospel creed with faith
Sudden, exultant, pure, making earth heaven !
But ere this consummation be attained,
There must be toil and hardships, pain and strife.
The boy half knows already that to man
There is no Crown without the foregone Cross ;
No glory fit for manly heart to seek,
That shall not cost him heart's blood of the best :

But to his pure young thought the glory shines,
The Crown shines, *sure*. He can believe in all,
Danger and difficulty, toil and pain,
Fear and anxiety, sacrifice and death—
But not in cowardice, old age, or failure.
Thus Christopher Columbus longs and dreams,
In Genoa four hundred years ago.

Meanwhile the sun went down in perfect calm ;
The fisherman returned, and springing down
Upon the thwarts, the boat beneath him rocked,
Rousing the boy : “ I will go with you, Stino.”
And he, a stalwart, grizzled, lean-faced man,
Pausing a little ere he loosed the rope :
“ Aye, sir, and welcome, but the wind has dropped,
And I shall have to work her with the oars,
And to go out afar.” “ Content,” he said,
And as they stood each laid his oar in place,
And working steadily they floated far
Across the sheeted crimson of the bay.

After an hour they stopped to set their lines ;
The golden moon came up upon the east
And Christopher watched, musing. When her orb
Was floating clear above the sea he spoke :
“ Stino, do you believe the world is round ? ”
“ The Saints defend us, Master ! ” he exclaimed,

Signing the cross upon his brow and breast,
“ It is against religion.” “ So they say,”
Made answer Christopher, “ but at Pavia
The elder students of the college talk—
I have heard other things.” “ Nay, do not heed
them,”

Said the old man, “ for it is dangerous
To body as to soul to hearken heresies.
But Marco Polo that you talk about,
His beautiful stories do one good to hear.
Tell me one now.” “ No, Stino, sing to me,
I have no mind to talk.” Then Stino sang,
But Christopher remained with musing eyes
And the song passed above him like the wind :

I.

Over yonder dreary mountains,
Seeking work in towns unknown,
Through the lavender and myrtles
Strides young Cesare alone.
All alone.

II.

Once he turns ; in farthest distance
Genoa the sea-born shines,

And by Genoa his sweetheart
Sits alone beneath the vines.
All alone.

III.

He must leave her there in hardships,
Waiting for him many years ;
Here, alone upon the mountain,
Freely flow his bitter tears.
All alone.

IV.

Climbing higher up the mountain,
By the path a man is laid ;
Lost and weary, sleeping soundly,
All alone and none to aid.
All alone.

V.

Fallen below, his knapsack bursting
Shews a glittering store of gold ;
Cesare turns sick and trembling,
On his brow the sweat stands cold.
All alone.

VI.

Gasps a prayer then stoops to rouse him,
Saying in an undertone :

“ Yes, dear sweetheart, we would rather
Pass our weary lives alone.”

All alone.

Late in the autumn night the boat returned
And reached the town by sunrise. Stino went
To sell his fish ere yet the pearly tints
Had faded from their scales. He took his way
Along the quay and up the dark steep streets,
Meeting the mules that from the country came
Shaking their bells and tassels ; on their backs,
On the red cloth that almost swept the ground,
Panniers that overflowed with fresh-plucked fruit,
Salads and garden-food ; and when he reached
A small side door into Durazzo's Palace,
Forth came the white-capped cook and bought the
fish,

According to their daily custom ; thence
Returning to the Mole he made a pause
By a polenta stall to break his fast,
Stopping again at a small wine-shop door

For a long draught of well-cooled country wine.
Then sauntered down the Mole, where Christopher
Beside the port-light at the farther end
Had stayed, and sat upon a low stone post
To which the fishermen make fast their boats ;
One knee across the other, and his gaze
Resting upon the distance where the ships
Come slowly into sight above the edge
Of the round world. The book upon his knee,
One finger lying in the half-closed leaves,
No longer held his spell-bound thoughts enchained,
Nor were they conscious of the groups at hand
Of fishermen and sailors playing Moro,
And jesting noisily ; with gleaming teeth,
And dark eyes energetic, full of fire ;
All in red caps, and bound about the waist
With sashes of bright crimson. To these came
A wandering minstrel with his ribboned lute,
Whom they with joyful clamour bade to stay
And sing them songs of chivalry and love ;
He sat and sang “ The Tomb of Leonore.”

I.

Conradin the ocean rover
Proud and glad is coming home,
In his treasure-laden galley
Pressing slowly through the foam ;
Sailing to the island shore
Where the maiden Leonore
Waits the gay and gallant bridal
Makes her his for evermore.

II.

Conradin the ocean rover
Leaps down to the pebbled strand,
Looking towards the turret-window
For her smile and waving hand :
Vainly looks, a mournful strain
From the chapel fills his brain
With a terrible misgiving
That his love is turned to pain.

III.

So it is. His loving maiden
Lay already in her grave,
Whilst he planned their gallant bridal

Sailing homewards proud and brave.
There a sculptured tomb he placed,
With his richest treasures graced,
Golden tissues, gems and pictures,
All in seemly order placed.

IV.

There he watched at eve and morning,
There he watched by night and day ;
All his strength went out in weeping,
All his manhood waned away,
Till one night when dawn was near
Grey and cold, he seemed to hear
Mystic music slowly changing
Into words distinct and clear.

V.

Said, " What dost thou idly weeping,
Thou who wast so strong and brave ?
What is all this funeral splendour
Round about a maiden's grave ?
Whilst Christ's holy Tomb forlorn
Stands undecked, the Paynim's scorn ?
And the Paynim still is master
In the land where Christ was born ? "

VI.

Conradin rose up at morning,
Called for food, for wine and bread ;
Took the treasures, gold and jewels,
Laying lilies there instead.
Said, " O Love ! Love ever mine,
In my heart is thy best shrine."
Summoned then both men and galleys,
Sailed away for Palestine.

The song was ended amid hearty bravos,
And when these ceased, a lad with bare brown legs
An devil-gleaming eyes, cried out, " Now, minstrel !
Tell of what happened in St. John's, you know,
When the five cardinals were put to death
For their conspiracy against the Pope ;
He paid them well—that 's the right kind of Pope."
And he grinned hideously. Another said,
" No, no, the chains we brought from Pisa's gates !
I see them often by St. George's door
Or St. Donato's arches. Tell of those,
I love to hear of our great victories."
Then Stino spoke, for Christopher loved music
And had turned round to listen ; " Let thy next

Be by the old Monk of the Golden Islands,
One that is called I think 'The Fatal Voyage.'"
The other nodding, tuned his lute to sing,
But Christopher called out, "Now give us more
Of the Crusades, some tale of noble deeds
At Acre or Jerusalem itself,
Dragons and sorceries and Knights and Saints
And some great lady beautiful."

"I will,"

Answered the minstrel, "when I can recall
Such goodly tale to mind, but in meantime
Here is a ballad full of demonry."

THE FATAL VOYAGE.

He sat beside the breaking waves,
His elbows resting on his knees,
The clouds tossed wildly overhead,
The wind hissed through the cypress trees ;
And winds and waves a cadence kept
To stories murmuring in his brain
Of the far-off distant main ;
Restless thoughts that seldom slept,
Of islands lying in the seas
That spread beyond the gates of Hercules.

He was a Greek of later days,
Born and baptised in Christian faith,
But hearkening to old pagan tales
Had brought his soul in risk of death.
He dreamed of finding in the West
The old Atlantis, island blest,
Where pearls instead of pebbles lie
Upon the sands of sifted gold ;
Where mighty trees obscure the sky,
And rivers through them flowing bright
On jasper, beryl, and sardonyx,
And alabaster gleaming white,
Are filled all through with rainbow light ;
Where flowers in strange rich hues unfold ;
And fruits and spice their odours mix.
His friends besought him, but in vain ;
The priests in vain their warning gave,
The brain-sick fool took ship, and hired
A scanty crew of stout and brave ;
A stout and brave but ruffian few
For no good man would join his crew.
A fresh, enchanting morning broke,
Its dewy odours filled the air,
The rippling sea alluring shone,
The breeze blew steadily and fair ;

They spread their sail and settled to their oars,
And bore away triumphant from those shores.
Till night the lessening ship was seen
To keep her steady onward way ;
Men marvelled that she had been blessed
With such a bright propitious day,
But some had marked a small cloud rise
Even in those clear propitious skies.
What time she sailed that cloud arose,
All day it had pursued her close,
Then o'er the sunset hung, a speck of dark
Shewing where lay the now invisible barque.

Days, weeks, passed by, then tidings came
That still she held her onward course,
Driven by a mighty eastern gale
That day and nightly gathered force,
Driving her harder hour by hour
Though tranquil skies did still prevail,
Leaving all other ships at rest
But hurrying her into the West,
Right onward through those terrible wild seas
That rage below the cliffs of Hercules.
There spreading suddenly, the cloud
Burst on her ; thunders crashing loud,
And rain and hail and flashing fires

Rent every sail and spar and shroud,
Then sank in awful calm away.
And all the sky was leaden grey,
And still the terrible east wind
Stronger and stronger drove behind ;
Her crew yet living, on the vessel bore,
No soul returned and no man saw them more.

A shuddering silence rested on the group,
A silence broken by a bold young voice :
“ The Greek was right, he was no brain-sick fool.”
And Christopher was standing in their midst,
Flushed and afire. “ Why, so ought any man
To follow what he plainly sees is true.”
“ True? why what could be falser?” Stino cried,
“ But here is Father Andrew, he will shew
That Greek was a cursed heretic.”

Then the priest
Set forth at length how Mother Church alone
Could guide her children in the ways of knowledge,
And whoso would not listen to her voice
Was outcast and condemned, a child of wrath ;
And she had said, yea, positively affirmed,
That all the earth was now well-known to man,

And whoso sought for more transgressed the bounds
Of lawful knowledge and was heretic.

“ But, father,” still urged Christopher, “ to him
These things appeared the truth—the very truth,
What could he do but follow them and die ? ”

“ Hush, hush ! ” cried Stino, “ we will hear no
more.

Comrades, strike up a fisher’s barcarole,
Minstrel, begin, and I will lead the chorus.”

BARCAROLE.

I.

Fishermen, behold the setting, setting sun,
The soft red clouds spreading slow ;
The night will be dark, the night will be calm,
Who to the fishing will go ?

Chorus.

Giorgio and Masuccio, Gian and Petruccio,
Carlo and Vicenzio, Toni and Lucenzio,
All—all—all—to the fishing go.

II.

Forty boats we start o'er the tranquil, tranquil sea,
Dip in your oars soft and slow,
The young moon is set, all the winds are still,
We to the fishing will go.

Chorus.

Giacomo, Santino, Giulio and Stino,
Beppo, Gasparino, Cecco, Valentino,
All—all—all—to the fishing go.

III.

Now we are far on the black, black silent wave,
Hang out the fires all aglow ;
Each flame 's above the stern in its swinging iron
cup,
The fishes come flashing from below.

Chorus.

Ready now, Masuccio, Giorgio and Petruccio,
Every man be ready, spear in hand and steady,
Strike—strike—strike—a quick and deadly
blow.

IV.

When the luck is good, in the laden, laden boats
 Homewards we turn glad and gay ;
 We think of our wives, of our little baby boys,
 And sing to Holy Mary on our way.

Chorus.

Strike then, Petruccio ! strike then, Masuccio !
 Strike then, Vicenzio ! Carlo and Lucenzio !
 All—all—all—strike before we go.

HYMN.

I.

Holy Mary, gentle Mary !
 Ever gracious, ever kind,
 Bless'd be thou who smoothed the waters,
 Bless'd be thou who lulled the wind,
 Holy Mary !

Holy Mary, gracious Mary !
 Thou did'st guide the fishing spear,
 Thou did'st hide the sky in darkness,
 Thou did'st send the fishes near.
 Holy Mary !

III.

Holy Mary, Mary Mother !
Bless'd the babe upon thy breast ;
For his sake thou feed'st our children,
Love them, Mary make them bless'd.

Mary Mother !

Amen, Amen.

Whilst yet that high "Amen " hung in the air
And on the lips of Christopher, he felt
Some living thing come close about his knees
And cling around them ; looking down he saw
The dancing eyes and laughing rosy mouth
Of his young brother pressed against his side.
" Here thou art, Christopher ! where did'st go last
night ?

I wanted thee to tell me pretty tales
At supper-time."

"A-fishing, little brother,
Out with old Stino all night I was."
"And did'st thou bring me home a little fish?
Thou promised it."

" No, no, the little fishes
Remained in bed all night like little brothers."

“Then come and buy some watermelon for me,
White figs and grapes and nuts.” So Christopher
Swung up the merry child upon his shoulders,
But then the priest, who had but stood aside,
Drew near with warning and uplifted hand.
“Young man,” he said, “behold the tender love
This innocent child has for thee, one might say
Thy hand is on his soul : a solemn trust
Is thine for good or evil—heed it well.
I see thou hast religion in thy heart,
Give him of that thy best, and for his sake,
Thinking upon his fresh and spotless soul,
Avoid and quell those lofty swelling thoughts
Those mischievous amusements of thy mind,
Keeping thyself to sober, well-known truths,
That he be not a child of wrath, nor thou.”
But here the boy snatched off his brother’s cap,
And beat his head with it, and pulled his curls,
And called out loudly in his ringing voice
To make him go. A merry laugh ran round,
And Christopher, with quick respectful word
To Father Andrew, set off at a run,
And brought Diego to a fruiterer’s stand
That nestled by a palace, in a corner
Made by a flight of carven marble stairs.

Here whilst he dropped him gently to the ground
Ran up Bartholomew, a little older
And graver than Diego but like him
Of black Ligurian eyes and black curled hair.
He with a like acclaim of loving joy
Jumped round his brother shouting, who did then
Buy for them both the fruit they loved the best,
White figs and nuts and slices thick and cool
Of green-white purple-seeded watermelon,
Also of bread, and took of that himself.
Then as he turned away, the children following
With laden hands and shortened careful steps,
A townsman joined him anxious-eyed and told
Of a fresh quarrel that was breaking out
Between the Doria and Grimaldi lords
And like to grow to bloodshed in the streets.
Thus talking they came back upon the Mole,
The youth, with knitted brow, sprang lightly up
Upon the pillar, and the children sat
Below, singing and playing as they ate.
Old Stino came, to whom they gave a share,
And he half-kneeling by them, bade them name
The various craft that sailed across the bay,
Or lay at anchor : galley, carrack huge,
Bird-winged felucca, long straight galliasse ;

The children knew them all, and named them right.
Serious discourse the men about them held
Of those perpetual factions in the town,
And heavy burdens that they had brought on all.

“See, see !” cried Christopher, with eager bound
On to the pavement, “see the galliasse
That has come into sight within the hour !
It is my kinsman’s, surely, Gian Colombo’s.”
Then all attentive gazed and made surmise
For and against, and told each other tales
Of Gian Colombo’s many deeds at sea,
And how he now returned from a great venture
To seize on certain ships bound for Byzantium
Laden with Eastern merchandise for the Greeks,
For at that time were Greeks and Genoese
At deadly feud. Meanwhile the galliasse
Had drawn so near that not a doubt remained,
But much discourse arose and fierce remark
How she came back alone and must have failed
In the proud charge the town had trusted to her.
The children slept, tumbled upon each other,
For now full noontide burned above their heads,
Stino had moved to let his shadow make
A kindly shelter for them, and had soon,
Leaning against a pile of spars and cordage,

Sunk into sleep himself ; their brother paced
About the pier or sat upon the edge
Swinging his feet impatient, in his eyes
A rising cloud of angered pride and pain.
The little crowd increased, and one brought news
That still the streets were quiet.

Now the ship
Had drawn so near that faintly could be heard
The slow dip of her many sweeping oars,
Followed by the quick flash along each blade,
For light the airs that stirred the sultry noon.
At last she was at hand, and veering round
To enter port beneath the western cliff
She came in slowly, as a large-winged bird
Settles down softly by his rock-built nest.
Some shouts and cheers there were ; and Christopher
Cried, “ Stino, come, to boat ! and board her quick
Before Colombo sees us ! Slip along
Behind those galleys and get round his stern
While he casts anchor.” And old Stino rose
And jumped into his boat ; the boys aroused,
So eagerly entreated leave to go
He could not but agree, but with a charge
To sit as still as if they were at mass.
So the two children crouched down side by side

As grave as little images, in the bows,
Their brother's kindly frown and frequent nod
Keeping them patient while the boat was sculled
And pushed and guided to Colombo's stern.
The lissome youth climbed up the ropes and chains,
And entering cautiously he found himself
At one end of the galleries made to shelter,
On either side, the rowers at their work.
None sat beneath them now, the sweeping oars
Drawn partly in hung idle, all the men
Busy at other tasks. Forward he saw
The Admiral, preparing to depart ;
A broad-built handsome man whose deep-set eyes
Of kindling grey had something in their flash
Like Christopher's, but his red hair was short,
And all his bearing was more harsh and rough.
Then Christopher rejoicing ran along
The narrow gangway, springing light of foot -
Over the cannon chained down to the deck,
And standing by the Admiral, waved his cap
And hailed him cheerily ; but he replied
With hasty nod and gesture, for his mind
Went after other matters of grave need.

Rapt in a thrill of happiness, the youth
Stood awhile gazing, went amongst the men,

Questioned and talked, and lent a helping hand,
Scarcely remembering how the hours went by ;
Then hastening to the stern, saw how the boys
Scrambled about with wonted noise and glee.
But Stino met him with an anxious face,
And told of tidings that a fierce affray
Was raging in the streets around their home,
A very wild encounter, and he feared
The boys might come to harm with him alone.
Then Christopher came swinging down in haste,
And calling, as he dropped into the boat,
“ Then need indeed to get them home at once !
Ho, comrades ! who will help ? Stino with one
Will bear the children if we meet with foes,
I and another keep or force a way.”
A ready answer came, two stalwart sailors
Joined Christopher and Stino, and to shore
They brought the boat again. Safe way they made
With little hindrance through the narrow streets,
Taking a circuit clear of blows and blood.
The frightened boys, one on his brother's back
The other on a friend's, were kindly borne
Up the steep streets upon the eastern slope.
Once and again they passed a palace-gate,
And looking in beheld the central court

Beneath whose graceful arches, gay and sweet
Stood in their carven tubs small trees and flowers,
And in whose midst the murmuring fountains
played—

Now filled with armed men, servant and lord,
And clanging noise of armour and defence.

Up the steep streets they toiled, and near the
walls

They reached a plain white dwelling in the shade
Of tall acacias, by an olive-ground ;
This was Colombo the wool-comber's house.
They climbed the narrow stair and at the head,
Within a chamber door, the father stood,
Haggard and pale. His visage lighted up
When he beheld the boys, for in the room
Lay in her mother's arms their little girl
Francesca, faint with terror, on her cheek
A scar yet bleeding ; for Domenico,
When first he heard the fray and hurried out,
Had found his daughter driven to the wall
By the fierce combatants, and in her fears
And being hurt a little, she had swooned
Just as her father reached her. Her he had borne
In safety home, and had in anguish turned
To seek the younger children.

By this time

Francesca had revived, and seeing there
All the kind faces of her home, she smiled
And raised herself and kissed her mother's cheek,
And pulled her father's beard, and laughed again.
Then Christopher brought out a box he had
Of shells and boyish hoards of long ago,
And placed her underneath the shaded window
Upon the foot-beam of her mother's loom,
A vine-branch swinging in above her head.
The mother moved about the large bare room,
And having done all needful for her girl,
Prepared a meal of soup and fish and bread,
Salad well dressed with vinegar and oil,
Garlic and cheese, and purple Nervi wine,
And pressed her son and his good friends to eat.
But Christopher would not, and set himself
To go back with his comrades to the port.
Then did his mother, with her large black eyes,
Larger and blacker through the thronging tears,
Pray him to stay in safety, but he laughed
And went out with his quick unfearing tread.

When with his comrades he came forth again
Beneath the acacias standing by the door,
Whence they could see all Genoa and the bay,

He stood a little gazing round the heavens,
South-west he turned, and sudden pointing cried,
“ Look how the clouds are spreading up the sky !
And how the sea grows greyer and more grey,
Darker and yet more dark, and flecked with white !
Hark ! the dull sound that murmurs from afar !
The fierce Libeccio comes ! Fearful will be
The sea to-night, and terrible for all
Who neither reach their port nor clear the coast.
Quick ! let us hasten down and go to help.”
So they went down their quickest, but the wind
Was on the bay before them, driving fast
One wave behind another, tearing up
The solid waters into spray and dust
And filling the wide heavens with their roar.
The young man and his comrades took their boats
And went with eager hearts to help and save.
When morning came again serene and bright,
The sullen heaving of the waves alone
Was witness to the terrors overpast.

Before his house-door Domenic was set,
He and his Admiral cousin in the shade,
A morning meal between them, and his wife
Attending on them. From the house there ran
A wooden bridge or balcony that led

Into the room where Domenic and his men
Worked at their trade ; up to the hand-rail grew
And hung about it, twisted stems and leaves
Of trailing pumpkin ; there, amidst the leaves,
The golden vase-shaped flowers and golden fruit,
Looked out the little face, bent on her arms,
Of young Francesca watching those below.
Colombo made enquiry for the lad,
And then Susanna, standing by her spouse
And resting one hand on his shoulder, told
How he had come long after midnight home,
Entirely wearied, having gone to sea
With comrades daring as himself, and saved
Three men from drowning off a shattered wreck.
Now he was laid in bed, as fast asleep
As ever she had seen him when a babe.

“ The lad should go to sea,” Colombo said,
Resting his elbow on the table there.
“ I fear so,” answered Domenic. “ I wished,
I dearly wished to make a scholar of him,
He did well at Pavia, very well,
And our confessor here commends him much
For learning past his years.” Then eagerly
Susanna interrupted : “ Aye indeed,
He can make poetry ; my little girl

Francesca there, found something he had writ
Which looks like verses—but I cannot read.
You, Sir, you read them to me !”

“ I indeed ?

Well, well I will, but Saints above ! my pipe
Will make rough music of them.” Then came forth
In loud sea-accent this :

Eagle, eagle, rising on thy steady pinions
Farther, ever farther in the realms of light !

Give me of thy freedom, give me of thy swiftness,
Give me of thy vigour and thy piercing sight !

I would never linger, even on these mountains
Guarding in her freedom Genoa proud and bright ;

I would float and travel east and west and south-
wards,
Following every coast-line in my hovering flight ;

I would trace the rivers to their secret sources ;
I would judge the mountains in their breadth and
height ;

I would scan the waters of the inland basins ;
And the great volcanoes roaring in their might ;

I would cross all countries ; I would pass the bound'-
ries

Where the pleasant daylight stops in endless night ;

I would search the ocean and find out the circles
Where the sea is ended, and learn the secret right.

Then how proud and happy I should tell these
wonders

To my little brothers listening in delight !

When he had done he smiled a crooked smile
And rose up from his seat, beating one fist
Into his open hand : " The boy 's a fool,
Brain-sick, quite brain-sick, he will do no good
Out of a convent. This is utter raving,
There 's not a word of sense or meaning in it."
Then said Susanna with the wistful eyes :
" O sir, the other paper that we found
Perhaps might please you better, it may be
That he was older when he wrote it. See,
Will you not read it, cousin ?" And she looked
So gently at him, holding out the sheet,
That with a grim grimace he took it from her
But did not seat himself, and read again :

I.

Here on Pavia's galleried bridge,
Across the plains I gaze,
Where silent stands the ripening corn
Beneath the noon-day blaze :
Sadly I think of those wild shores
Where passed my childish days.
Genova ! Genova !

II.

The colleges and level streets
Are fine and grand to see ;
The river swirling on its course
Has something fresh and free :
But I long for my hilly city
That stands beside the sea.
Genova ! Genova !

III.

The bare, bare hills, the wide, wide sea,
The boats, the fishermen bold ;
The ships coming in with their treasures
Of Indian wealth untold ;

The midnight storms and the wild free life,
I love as I loved of old.
Genova ! Genova !

“ Ah, well,” he said, “ that is a little wiser ;
He says he better loves the rough sea life
Than his fine college doings at Pavia.”
“ Just so,” said Domenic, “ the boy’s whole heart
Is set upon the sea, and brave he is,
And ready-handed, and a right good boy,
You know it, Gian Colombo.”

“ Yes, I do.

I love the lad for all he is too dreamy
And a bit monkish. He shall go with me
Next time I sail, a week or two’s salt water
Will wash the nonsense out. He ’s a fine lad,
And I can do him good, teach him my calling
And raise him in the world. I love the boy,
I would my wild young nephew were more like
him ! ”

And so to Christopher, whilst he lay asleep,
There came fulfilment of his dearest wish.

CANTO II.

EARLY MANHOOD.

SLOW, soft and slow, the April night recedes
Above the proud old city, Genoa,
Slowly recedes and slowly dawn appears.
Before his father's door, at the stair-head,
Resting his hands on the carved wooden rail,
Stands Christopher Columbus, a strong man,
Weighted with thirty years. Leaving the house
For early mass, the peaceful perfect dawn
Had settled on his soul and stayed his feet,
And he leaned there attentive. Then the dreams
Of his past boyhood, slowly rising up
And filling all his memory with the light
Of their enchantment, mastered him again.

“Lo, now ! how many years my busy life
Has held me in restraint, body and soul !
Travail and war and cares for those I love
And deaths and sorrow. Ever, through it all,

I heard from time to time the inner voice
That called to me, 'Forget not thy great dream !'
And ever in the pauses of my toils,
Pacing the deck at midnight or as now
Watching the re-creation of the world,
A power from some unseen intelligence,
A power from God himself seems to await
To give me revelations. Day is coming !
And the loud singing of the nightingales,
Like draughts of wine, like draughts of new-pressed
wine,

Fires every vein with courage. Oh, behold
The light that reddens on those fretted clouds
That drop a flush upon the shimmering sea ;
That strikes with gold Capo dell' Melé's head
And rests afar on mist-like Corsica !
Behold and ask whence comes it, for the sun
Not yet has risen from that dark abyss
Where night by night he takes from west to east
His deep mysterious way ; below all seas,
Below all lands, below all natural powers.
Can it be so ? Too inharmonious
And harsh a thing it seems ! That he—
Who half the hours his calm procession makes
Through a pure ether, far above all soil,

All rough confusion—nightly should descend
To something coarse, chaotic, turbulent,
Is past all possibility or belief.
Plainly must he, being the same, maintain
By day and night the same essential life
Here or invisible, as he remains
Above the transitory storms of day,
However dark, however turbulent,
The same all godlike. Sure the arching course
We see him take must circle round complete :
Hence does the morn strike first upon the sky,
Then on the mountain-tops, the highest first,
And lower slowly to the level sea.
The sun is fully risen ! Like to him
The coming ships rise gradual into sight
And gradual sink like him : surely their course
Arching like his, would circle round complete
If man had power to follow, on and on
Across those western seas Atlantic named,
And find no sudden edge nor vague Beyond,
But spherul smoothness, going till the land,
The eastern borders of these continents,
The farthest shores of Asia, were attained !
My God ! my God ! sustain my trembling soul,
I cannot see thy will nor my own thought,

But nature shudders to her inmost veins
Beneath a touch divine. Amen, so be it,
When and whatever thy great will may be."

The church-bells rang to matins, and he went
With eyes still rapt and calm unconscious steps
Down to St. Matthew's Church, the Dorias' own,
For much he loved the name of Doria,
And did not heed a minstrel whom he met,
Haggard and stained, who paused and sharply gazed
Turning to watch him as he walked along.
He reached the church by Martin Doria founded :
Built up of marble, banded black and white
From the first courses to the sculptured eaves,
According to the privilege bestowed
Upon the Dorias and three other lords ;
On the white bands, above the entrance door,
There stood, in carven words, the history
Of actions by that grand heroic race.
He entered in amidst the crowd to pray.

The Minstrel took his way as once before
Down to the Mole, where as before he found
Old Stino, sitting barehead in the sun,
His grizzled locks now thin and silver-white,
His old skin browner, his keen eyes more dim.

By him the Minstrel stood and after speech
Of mutual recognition and salute,
Related how, some fourteen years ago
Travelling beyond Ravenna down the coast,
He had been taken prisoner on the sea
By Grecian pirates, and detained till now,
When he had made a hard escape, and come
Shattered and poor back to his native land.
Then said to Stino: "Who is he I passed
Close to St. Matthew's Church? A man of mark,
Noble and grave in bearing, tall and strong,
But with the dreamy and yet fiery eyes,
The ruddy cheek, white brow, and steady mouth,
Authoritative, sweet, that I remember
One morning on this quay when last we met;
A youth who dared to argue with a priest
And yet was neither scoffer nor profane.
Can this be he?"

"Aye, aye, sir, it is he.
Grey-haired and yet but thirty years of age.
He went, no doubt, to early mass, was never
A better Catholic nor more religious,
But still, as ever, after something new,
Wearing his heart with notions of research
And ever more to learn, yet all the while

He knows so much they say that he might be
A doctor at some college." " Yet he looks,"
Replied the other, " like a man to act,
Fit for command and danger ? " " So he is,"
Said Stino, " and 't is just that makes me wonder
Where he gets all his learning, for his life
Is ever full of business on the sea,
Trouble and fighting. He is now come back
From the great expedition with Duke John,
John of Calabria, for his father René.

" About four years ago the Duke set out
To claim the crown of Naples for his father,
And our Republic gave them liberal aid,
Money and ships, our best and bravest men.
The thing has failed, you know, but he was there,
Our Christopher, the bravest and the best,
And I was with him, in his ship I went,
And many a bold triumphant thing we did.
One time we kept the Bay of Naples clear
From Ischia to Capri and all round,
With but four galleys, at that time Duke John
Being driven to shelter in the Isle of Ischia.
Last we were ordered right away from Tunis,
To cut out a great galley lying there,
With our one ship. But when we neared San Pedro,

That island on Sardinia's south-west coast,
We heard for certain two ships and a carrack
Were with our prey. So then our crew lost
heart,
Fairly took fright, and after much ado
Our captain, Christopher, you know, gave way
And turned our head due north, setting all sail
To make Marseilles, and ask another ship—,
And help in men. By this time it was dark ;
All night we tacked and tacked, and still it seemed
Our course was unaccountable, the stars
Shone in unlikely quarters, and I watched
Our captain's face, for there was something there
I could not fathom, but at last I spoke.
' Captain,' I said, ' 't is strange to see old Sirius
Set there upon our right, we sailing north ? '
He looked up at the sail and whistled low,
' True, Stino, true,' he said, ' but we sail right.'
I asked no more but turned it in my mind,
And when dawn came I tell you there we were
Close upon Tunis harbour, having turned
The point of Carthagenà in the night.
How his eyes gleamed when I saluted him !
How the men swore ! But there was no help then
But fight it out. And so we did."

“Stay, stay,”

The Minstrel said, “how did he cheat the crew?”
“Cheat ! cheat !” swore Stino, “No, he did but turn
The compass a few points to make it seem
That we went north when we were going south,
To make them do their duty. And they did,
They answered his demand, right well he knew
That he could trust them once before the foe.

“But they tell tales about him, evil tales,
Tales that are true of Gian Colombo’s nephew,
A braggart, rash, not like our Christopher.
But people, knowing he has often sailed
With his old kinsman, take him for the nephew.
I am old, I am getting very old ;
I have seen many men, but never one
To come near Christopher. He is stern, I know,
When stern he must be, and his blood is hot
And quick by nature, but his choleric spirits
He keeps well under, and is just and kind,
Courteous to all men, and his loving heart
Soft as a woman’s. Well his father knows
And his two brothers, what a loving heart
Is his, and helpful hand. May the Saints bless him
ever !
Bless him, and take him in his time to glory !”

About this spring Columbus set his mind
To go to Portugal. His old desires
Drew him like love of country to the land
Which was at that time as the heart and brain
Of great adventures and a large research ;
Upon whose soil Prince Henry's College stood,
Where were taught all things then to science known
Of the starred heavens and outlines of the world,
Of naval arts and management of ships ;
The country of that Prince whose noble zeal
Had won for Portugal new isles and shores,
And made her great in maritime renown ;
The country of that Prince whose name was grown
To Christopher's imagination dear
As poet's hero to a dreaming boy.
But between him and his desire there lay
Pledges of service on the inland seas,
In commerce and in war—and time went by.

Thus after many years he came to Lisbon,
Lisbon that sits upon her many hills,
The spreading river waters at her feet.
There dwelt he, sometimes sailing ; and on shore
Made for his living maps and seamen's charts.
When first he came to Lisbon he set up
His lodging in a house whereof he knew,

Where dwelt an old Italian named Raimondo,
A barber's shop that looked upon a space
'Midst the old Moorish houses standing round,
Where ancient cork-trees grew, of rugged bark
And jagged rustling leaves, amid whose shade
A little Moorish fountain leaped and fell ;
Thence by a round-arched gateway went a street
Narrow and steep to All-Saints' church* and convent.

About the fountain came, towards close of day,
The poorer neighbours, and to Raimond's door
Traders of substance, sailors from afar,
And ofttimes learned men—to lounge and talk .
Sebastian came, an old sea-captain he,
Who seeing there a stranger, Christopher,
Saluted him with kindest courtesy,
According to his country's wont, and fell
Into discourse. Then, noting the great zeal
Columbus had for travel and for all
Concerning navigation, met in full
His pressing questions ; thus absorbed they turned
From Raimond's door and slowly crossed the Place
Into the round-arched gateway. Up the street
They passed, and at a poor man's door there stood
A sister from the Nunnery above

And a shawled lady just within the door,
The lady's shawl caught by the latch, dropped
down

A little from her face, just as she smiled
Upon the poor man's babe, and laid her hand
Caressing on its head. Her face was sweet
With a grave sweetness not of early youth ;
Arched delicate features, fine black level brows,
Soft raven hair, a colourless clear cheek,
Columbus glancing saw ; having passed on
He asked the other who the lady was.
He answered: " She is Palestrello's daughter,
Bartholomew Moñis de Palestrello,
A gentleman of Italy, who wed
A lady of this place, and by Prince Henry
Was sent to the Madeira Isles to found
A colony in Porto Santo. There
For many years he governed for us well,
And is but lately dead. His wife has gone
Out to the island to collect his goods,
And ere long will come back ; Donna Felipa,
The daughter, is a boarder in the convent
Where half her youth was passed. Look, through
the trees
Beyond the churchyard you may see the wall

Which bounds the convent garden." They walked
on

Beneath the plane-trees and the garden wall,
And sitting in a field of citron-trees
Now in their autumn bearing of green fruit,
And looking down on Lisbon and the bay
Which spreading Tagus makes, and on the hills
Distant and lovely, turned to that discourse
They held before.

Then did Sebastian tell
Of good Prince Henry, uncle to the King,
And now an aged man. "Sir, I have served
In all the expeditions he has sent
Down Afric's savage shores and their wild seas.
I was with those who passed Cape Bojador,
Coasted down Senegal to Cape de Verd,
Traded with Guinea's treasure-bearing shores,
And sailed out to the Isles which lie opposed
To Cape de Verd. Long ere that time we went
To the far-off Azores ; when first I saw
The magic needle rule the roughest crew
And guide the great ships on the pathless sea.
Yes ! I was there, forgive me if I boast,
But my heart swells within me. Those were grand
And perilous adventures ! glorious—

But of great danger. And the Prince himself !
I served him, sir, a good and noble man,
And I was one of those he trusted most,
So let me, senhor, be a little proud ! ”

Columbus stretched his hand in ready clasp :
“ Sir, you have reason to be greatly proud.
But pray tell me further, what is true
Of those hot regions deadly, and those seas
Men hold for demon-haunted ? ”

“ Their own fears
Are all the demons there and half the dangers.
The seas that beat upon all western coasts
Come driving in from that vast wilderness
Of untracked waters stretching to the west,
None knows how far ; rolling beneath such winds
As well may seem to uninstructed minds
The judgments of a God in wrath, or else,
The horrible sport of fiends without remorse.
The hugeness of those waves, the turbulence
Of that great ocean, are beyond your thought
Who have lived only on your tideless sea,
Your Mediterranean plain. But man has power
To rule all lower creatures, we have sailed
Leagues upon leagues across those dreadful seas
Time after time, and now the fear is gone.

But, sir, the terror of the burning zone,
Where it was thought the sun's perpetual heat
Glowed with such ever-growing potency
Age after age from old creation's dawn,
That now the fathomless waters tossed and
smoked,
Boiling gigantic from their very depths,
A barrier impassable—this, sir,
I own I did believe, but also this
Is all an idle fable. We have proved
No utter heat destructive even there,
Where at some certain seasons of the year,
The solar course goes in an upright arch
From east to west, and at noonday the sun
Stands overhead, and looking to the ground
Scarce can you see your shadow, lying closed
In a small circle round about your feet."

By this had night set in. The moon had risen,
Not quite at full, and made amidst the clouds
A silvery softness circled round with brown ;
Long feathery streaks stretched white and wild
o'er head,
Lovely and ominous. The captain rose.
"See," said he, "how the sky foretells the wind ;
Soon will the full moon's strongest influence,

Joined with the time of equal nights and days,
Bring up the highest tides against our shores.
Then, westerly gales prevailing, as even now
That sky foretells, the storms upon the coast
Will bring to mind the Flood of olden time,
So terrible and grand the sight they make,
“ And also, ” he said low, “ so much they bring
Of grief and ruined lives ! Good-night, Sir Stranger,
If you should care to hear yet further tales
Of what my voyages have taught and proved,
Come to me at my dwelling.”

“ Thanks, good sir,
But tell me one thing more, you have your charts,
On which the lines are set of these new countries ? ”

“ Aye, but my charts have such hard service
seen
They scarcely hold a shape intelligible,
But they are at your service.”

“ Thanks again ;
I will not fail to come, and I shall beg
Leave to draw out those charts again for you ;
It is a work in which I have good skill.”

They parted then. Captain Sebastian trod
Pond'rous and slow down a steep alley home ;
Columbus with bent head paced thoughtful back,

In his mind saying, " I must see that ocean
Tossed by its mighty, overmastering storms.
There lies the riddle of my life, vague, dark,
Baffling all present knowledge, without clue."
Here looking up he saw the convent walls
Looming above him, and his thoughts went on :
" Impenetrable stands this lowering pile,
But deep within its massive marble hides
As fair a woman's face as ever shone,
Seeming entirely unattainable,
But yet a bride for whoso has the heart
And the strong will to win her. Even so
Upon that ocean lies something that calls me,
Great and incomprehensible and vague,
But holding in its seeming lifeless mass
A living hope, a bright reality."

On the next morning Christopher set forth
Upon his way through Cintra to the coast,
That from the cliffs beside the Rock of Lisbon
He might behold the autumn spring-tide rise,
Reaching its height at midnight. As he went
The stormy weather ever growing worse
Fulfilled the presages of moon and clouds.
He passed through Cintra's fragrant flowery vales
And rocks pine-crested, and he crossed the hills

And reached the Roca as the sun went down
Just when the tide was lowest. Sandy shores
Lay in long reaches by the pebbled banks
And in the hidden corners of the cliffs ;
The great black waves successive, rolling up,
Broke with a roar upon the lower beach
And sent their white surf hissing up the coves
Sullen and swift, devouring all the sands,
And by the sands devoured. The winds so raged
That even Christopher's accustomed feet
Could not maintain their hold, and he knelt
down

Upon the grass for safety, so to watch
That range of mighty billows coming on,
And arching over till their foamy crests
Crashed and spread out upon the curves below.
Each after each long-reaching, stern they rolled
From where against the red horizon heaved
A long irregular line beneath the sun ;
The voice of many waters in uproar
Filled all the sense of hearing with their noise ;
The hurricane of wind thundered above ;
The gloomy rack drove swiftly overhead.

He watched, and to his mind there came the
words :

“ ‘ In the beginning God made heaven and earth,’
Also the waters of the whole great sea.
He rules that sea he made, those terrible waves
Which long and high roll in, each after each,
In cadence order regular, as if held
In iron reins by some unswerving hand,
Powerless in all their power, to disobey.
The red path on the waters grow more bright
As the sun sinks below them. Now he goes
To bear his warmth and glory to the lands
Whence come these raging billows ; nothing lies
Between me and those lands but this great sea,
The highway of God’s glory. Shall that sun
My fellow-creature, take his light and heat,
His large beneficence of life and good
To those poor pagan people, and not Christ
Bear of his everlasting life and heat
For the eternal saving of their souls ?
I hear thy message, Lord, across the sea
Thou sendest all this wilderness of waves
Crossed by red glory from the west, to speak,
And all this wilderness of waves shall turn
To bear thy messenger, who shall bear thee
As thy good servant erst, Saint Christopher,
Bore thee a child, across the rising stream.

But wilt thou be to me, as then to him,
A heavy burden? Wilt thou weigh on me,
As upon him, a pagan unbaptised?
Not so, Lord Christ! I own thy name and power,
And call myself thy servant and thy son,
Signed with the water and the chrism for thee.
When shall I go to do this holy work?
When to take up my Cross and follow thee?
And stay my yearning spirit? In thy time,
In thy good time, O Lord!"

Whilst yet he stayed

The sun went down, the darkened billows rose
Higher and higher as the tide came in;
The sands were swallowed up, the beaten rocks
Shook, and dashed up the flood in columned
spray;
And ever higher swelling came the sea,
Hanging above the cliffs and breaking down
In cold salt floods destructive on their heads.
Columbus in a rocky shelter leaned,
His whole soul rapt amid the ceaseless roar
That filled the darkness; nothing seen but when
The moon through riven clouds one moment shed
Her white cold glory on the tumult fierce.
Again his soul sent up his solemn vow:

“ I see these terrors, Christ, and those worse foes,
The ignorance and sinfulness of men,
The pride of kings and priests ; but neither powers,
Nor principalities, nor sword, nor fire,
Shall turn me back from following thy voice
Into the work appointed. Lord, Amen.”

CANTO III.

MARRIAGE, AND PORTO SANTO.

A TRANQUIL life Columbus led on shore,
Working for bread, the while the autumn
waned

Into the gentle winter of the land.
Ever religious, at the convent-church
Of All-Saints he was regular in prayer,
Matins and vespers and at Sunday mass.
There often when, with thoughts preoccupied
And heeding little what the service said,
There came the burst of music in response,
Or flowing anthem, one sweet woman's voice
Grew separate to his ear from all the rest
And drew his mind along with it to Heaven,
But working on him so insensibly
He never thought to wonder who thus sang.
He studied much, and made with learned men
Frequent exchange of letters, notably

With that renowned and learned Florentine,
Paul Toscanelli ; and the new-born art
Of making one book into many books,
Which gives all men the freedom of the world
Of intellect and knowledge, gave to him
Some well-filled, well-loved volumes, and of these
That which best served and most delighted him
Was the collection of research and travel
Made by the prelate Pedro of Aliaco,
Cambrai's archbishop, aided by his friend,
The learned Gerson. Little did he seek
At that time fellowship of many men ;
Captain Sebastian was his hearty friend
And oft companion, and the quiet months
Enriched his life with scarcely noted gifts,
Till the mid-winter came with fast and feast.

Upon the morning before Christmas Day
Sebastian prayed him for his company,
To meet and help Donna Felipa's mother,
Who was to land that day on her return
From Porto Santo home; but Christopher,
Being pressed by work, unwillingly refused.
So it fell out that late on Christmas Eve
He went up to the chapel to behold
The vigil kept of the Nativity

And hear the midnight mass. The church was
bright,

And thronged with worshippers ; near the full blaze
Of the high altar candles was Sebastian,
Beside him a strange lady whom Columbus
Knew for the widowed matron, and by her
Stood the once-seen Felipa, neither tall
Nor low of stature, all her bearing full
Of loving warmth and thoughtful self-control,
Her head held straight, her dark eyes raised, her lips
Parted to sing. Then he knew suddenly
Hers was the voice which he was wont to call
His consolation, inly likening it
To the warm summer moonlight, or the glow
Of morning on the mountains ; and he went
And stood beside her, and their voices rose
In harmony together up to Heaven.

The old year closed, and when it was late spring
Bartholomew Columbus came to Lisbon,
At Christopher's request, to seek employ
Amongst Prince Henry's captains on the sea.
There, sitting in his brother's room at night,
After all questions of the Genoa home
Were asked and answered, and his brother wrote
Word to their father, read he by the lamp

Close to the open window. In the dark
Of the old garden twinkling fire-flies danced,
And scents of tuberose and of heliotrope
Came in on the warm air. The book he read
Was a large printed volume parchment bound,
The work of Pedro the Archbishop, marked
Along its borders with his brother's notes
In his close, delicate writing ; as he read,
He found amongst its pages a loose sheet
Covered with verses in the same fine hand,
Which ran as follows :

I.

Love me, Lady of All Saints,
Love me, Felipa mine !
Love me by sunrise and starlight ;
All my spirit is thine,
Love me, love me, Felipa !

II.

When the olives are setting,
Love me, Felipa mine !
When the olives have blackened ;
All my spirit is thine,
Love me, love me, Felipa !

III.

When the orange trees blossom,
Love me, Felipa mine !
When their full globes hang golden ;
All my spirit is thine,
Love me, love me, Felipa !

IV.

When the violets by thousands—
Love me, Felipa mine !
Under the thickets make Heaven ;
All my spirit is thine,
Love me, love me, Felipa !

V.

When the myrtles are flowering,
Love me, Felipa mine !
Bridal myrtles and roses ;
All my spirit is thine,
Love me, love me, Felipa !

All the best gifts of Heaven, my dearly-loved,
We take in blissful silence, for no speech
Can to an adequate presentment reach

Of the deep things whereby the soul is moved :
Therefore, blessed maid, this precious heart of thine
 Kneeling I take in my two hands, and bow
 My face above it with a silent vow
To hold it, as from God, yet wholly mine ;
And when we stand before Him that dread Day
 When every life shall be unveiled and known,
 May I have kept more surely than my own
Thy heart in peace, and safety round thy way.
Blest ! Purest ! Worthiest ! Saint by All Saints
 given
To show to men a nearer view of Heaven.

Here did Bartholomew look up, and find
That Christopher was watching, with a light
Of heart-felt satisfaction in his eyes
And gently smiling lips—a tender light.
Bartholomew leaped up and threw his arm
About his brother's shoulders : “ Is it so ?
Is this dear lady thine ? ”

“ She is to be

After the Feast of Pentecost is done,
And thou must stay a little longer here
That I may have thee at my side, the day
That I receive her as my crown of life.”

Seven island lie upon the Atlantic seas,
Kin to the Old World, reaching towards the New :
Seven sister islands, called in olden time
The Fortunate, the Blessed, the Golden Isles ;
When endless light received the heroic souls
Whose deeds had won for them that after-life
Not granted by the gods to common men.
Seven islands now, but were the mountain tops,
Of great Atlantis, when her pointed hills
To heaven uprising, and her fruitful plains
Yet lay and shone upon the rolling sea
Which in these later ages bears her name ;
Which flows along her plains and deep ravines
To swell and break on Mauritania's shores
When erst she sank divided. Now those isles
Are the Canaries, called from the old race
Which did inhabit there. To northward lies
On these Atlantic waters Porto Santo
Not distant far from green Madeira's shore
Hilly alike, and wooded. Hither came
Columbus and his wife to dwell awhile
For here was her inheritance, a house
A fertile vineyard ; and not far away
Her sister dwelt, Pedro Correa's spouse.

Grey rose the rocky island on the sea,
Grey were the level clouds that hung above,

Slowly the soft and odorous winds bore on
A little ship along grey level waves
That gently heaved and sank beneath her prow.
She sailed for Africa, but had on board
Pedro Correa, and on his account
Came round to Porto Santo's little town
To land him there, and in his company
Columbus' youngest brother. On the prow
Diego stood, watching for the first sight
Of this new country where his brother dwelt ;
His thirty years had not weighed heavily,
And his frank brow and large black eyes still wore
The tranquil grace of boyhood ; in his garb
Was something of monastic style that went
Well with his innocent, unworldly gaze.
Still brighter beamed his boyish, eager eyes
When the ship rounded slow the southern cliffs
And entered the small harbour by the town.
Here did Correa and Diego land,
And passing through the street went out to seek
The house and vineyard where Columbus dwelt,
And as they went Correa pointed out,
With painted roof and long arcaded walls,
The governor's abode, where once had lived
Felipa's father, and he afterwards,
For also he had ruled the colony.

The island was one hill of solid rock,
Shelf rising above shelf of fire-formed cliffs
Yet fertile as the smoothest grassy field;
Along the narrow plains the sugar-canes
Rose in soft feathered plumes beside the path
Where the two men walked on, to mount the cliffs
Adown whose sides hung snaky cactus stems
Prickled, and decked with rose or crimson blooms ;
They passed by orange-groves; upon the slopes
Were fig and olive, and no larger trees
Adorned the rocky land, but flowers and herbs
With balmy odours filled the air they breathed ;
The wild-bees thronged there, humming in and out
Of every fragrant flower and of their cells
Hid in the clefts of the basaltic rocks ;
White sea-birds soared o'erhead ; their path was
crossed
By the grey conies or the lizards green.

Thus for a mile they took their upward way,
From ledge to ledge of verdure mounting slow,
Pausing on every ledge to gaze around ;
Meanwhile soft pressing through the upper clouds
The sun shone warm upon the flowers, and rocks
Mossed over with the grey-brown orchil-weed,
And the blue glimmer of the circling sea ;

They entered then a grove of laurel-trees
Amidst whose scented sprays and bright, broad leaves
The silver-gleaming doves or sat or flew
And made perpetual cooing, each to each,
In high and lower voices echoing round.
Thus walking slow with calm enjoyment filled
Through the dark solemn greenness, they came out
Where just before them, facing to the sea
And to a steep ravine of feathering shrubs,
Rose a straight cliff up which the liberal vines
Carried their gorgeous burden, leaf and fruit,
Purple and green and golden, made indeed
A glory of abundance. At the foot,
Shadowed and sheltered by the trailing vines,
Scarce to be seen for beauty, was the house ;
Along the front, by rustic columns held,
Sloped the broad eaves, and in the cool arcade
Some native women stood in eager groups,
Excited, talking, who when they beheld
Strange men advancing, screamed and fled away.
Correa and Diego entering, called,
For silent and deserted seemed the place,
And from an inner chamber came a dame
Bearing a covered burden. Of a face
Half like Felipa's, and a comely form.

The smiling matron was Correa's wife.
Scarce glancing at her husband she unveiled
What in her arms she held, a new-born child
Swaddled and wrapt, then to the wondering men
Who gazed and questioned : " Yes," she said, " it is
The little Christopher not one hour old,
Who waits his father's blessing, for he sailed
Three months back to Gomera, in the mind
To be returned ere now. Indeed, at noon
We saw his ship come in, or so we thought,
But must have been in error. So do thou,"
And to Diego turned, " take the poor babe
And cross and bless him for thou art the first
Of your own kin to see him." So Diego
Stretched out his arms and took his brother's child,
And crossed and kissed him, saying, " Precious child,
Be to thy father all he is to me
And God will surely bless thee." But meanwhile
Columbus had come in, a moment paused
And watched, and then cried out: ' Is she all well ?
Is the babe's mother well ?' And Pedro's wife,
Replying, took the child and held it out,
And he received and laid it on his breast,
Bending his head above its tiny face,
And stood in silence for a little time ;

Then raised his head, and with his serious smile
Returned the baby to its uncle's arms :

“ Bless him again, Diego, for himself
And absolutely ; he shall bear thy name
And thou shalt be his sponsor.” And he threw
His arm about his brother and rejoiced
Over his coming with the love of old,
Then with the quick step of his early youth
Entered the chamber where the mother lay.

The night had come, Felipa and the babe
Slumbered in peace ; beneath the low arcade
Sat the three men conversing. Thick and soft
The clouds continuous darkened all the sky,
Warm darkness filled the copses and ravine
Which lay below them ; fire-flies thronged the air,
Quick cries of the cicadas and a host
Of insect-kind, were constant, and the songs
Of waking birds broke in at every pause
Of the deep voices of the elder men,
And of Diego's ever boyish tones.

“ Thou hast seen all the islands ?” Pedro said,
“ Then tell Diego of them, he is set
Not to believe my stories.” “ Nay,” he said,
“ How should I hold them true ? Correa tells
That on these very shores he has beheld

Pieces of carven wood, brought by the waves
After strong gales from westward, carved and tooled,
But not with iron instruments like ours,
And that thou dost believe they came from lands
Across the ocean, dwelt in by strange men ?
Strange, yet like us ?”

“ Aye, so I do believe,
And I know many other signs like those :
Martin Vincenti, pilot to Prince Henry,
Found just such pieces far out to the west,
Hundreds of leagues beyond St. Vincent’s cape ;
He told me also of enormous reeds
Wrecked on these islands, like the giant canes
Writ of by Ptolemy, in India. I hear
From the Azores of pine-trees huge and strange,
Like none we know of, brought there by the waves ;
A man from Flores told me he had seen
Two corpses there washed up upon the beach,
With their hair still upon them and their flesh,
Therefore not come from far, and of a hue
And feature altogether different
From men in this known world. He told it so
That none could doubt his tale.” “ But,” said Diego,
“ Dost thou then hold it certain there is land
Beyond the ocean ?”

“ Aye, for years and years

It hath been sure to me. But not new lands
Till now unknown of men, but countries seen
By brave adventurous travellers of old,
The Rabbi of Tudela, the two Polos ;
John Mandeville of England : these and more
Who these four centuries have filled our ears
With Tartary, Cipango, and Cathay,
And the great Indies spreading round the world
Their rich magnificence. Long years has Portugal
Sought for the southern route by Africa,
Found in old time by an Egyptian king,
Found and forgotten ; and in olden time
Did many a sage and poet prophesy
The western highway to the eastern lands.
Yes, it is sure as Christ's blest Sacraments
That in the regions past the setting sun
Do lovely countries wait us, which will say—
When we have won them in the name of Christ—
' Beautiful are the feet upon the waves,
Of them who bring glad tidings of great joy.' ”

They all were silent ; then again Diego :

“ But there can never lovelier countries shine
Than our own Rivas, West and East,
Or this same Porto Santo ! As we came

Up from the town it seemed to me enough
To see its flowers, to breathe its heavenly air.”
Columbus laughed : “ Thou art a little brother
And ever wilt be. There are many lands
More bright and gorgeous or of sweeter charms.
Madeira’s wooded island, almost seen
From where we sit ; Gomera, Teneriffe
In the Canary Isles—there I have seen
Sights far more glorious of both flower and tree
Than I can well describe, and in those isles
Are skies more glowing both at morn and eve ;
Airs more celestial, and yet sweeter hopes
Come floating on them softly from the West.”
“ Which islands hast thou seen ? ” Correa said,
And then Columbus : “ I have been to four ;
Steep-sided Palma, pointed Teneriffe,
Small rocky Herro, chosen by Ptolemy
To fix the line whence every measurement
To east or west should count ; and now I come
Back from Gomera. All those isles abound
In wonderful sights. There stands in Teneriffe
A tree so strange, so dragon-like, so huge,
Hung as with swords, coiled branches like to snakes,
Bleeding red blood at every careless blow—
It seems the very dragon of old tales

Fixed and transformed to semblance of a tree ;
And there are golden birds of sweetest song
Filling the groves all day with ravishment."

Diego then : " Hast seen the island called
After St. Borondon ? The seamen say
It comes and goes by miracle, and none,
Soldier nor sailor, has set foot on it,
Yet those who sail the seas, and those who dwell
In the Canaries, see it as plain as day,
And have besought the king of Portugal
To grant it to their conquest."

" True, they have,
But none will ever find it. 'T is some play
Of changing heat and cold upon the air,
And all its hills and vales are but a show
Of cloud and vapour." " Such," replied Correa
" As men will call thy projects and thy faith."
Diego said : " Thou canst not, Christopher,
Thou canst not deem these things so steadfast sure
That thou wouldst sail to find those unseen lands ?
Who would go with thee ? Who would give thee gold ?
And who the ships ?" Then Christopher arose
And faced him in the darkness : " My own heart.
Diego, I am set upon this work
As called to it by God, no earthly thought

Can stay me, nor no earthly obstacle
Can be too difficult. I shall find the means,
I and Bartholomew—or if we fail,
I shall appeal to every crownèd head
In Europe and in England ; when one king
Gives me no countenance I shall seek another.
I nurse no idle dream, no common plan ;
Even in my boyhood I was called to this,
For this I ever hearkened to all tales
Of danger and adventure on the seas ;
For this I drank with a prophetic thirst
The science of the colleges, became
Fluent in knowledge, yet a seaman true,
Ready of hand, of cheerful fearless heart.

“ I do not dream, Diego. I shall wait
Till I have brought together proofs enough
To stir the dull and worldly, and convince
Both wise and ignorant. Soon I shall set out
For the equator, that I may declare
Of my own knowledge that the tropic seas
Are not impassable ; some aftertime,
Far to the north, to dreary ice-bound lands
Which lie beyond ev’n Thule, I shall go.
I have good charts and papers from my wife,
That were her father’s, full of useful lore

That in his many voyages he had gained ;
And a wise letter from Paul Toscanelli,
Rich in resource and help. He sent therewith
Maps made anew from those of Marco Polo,
And all of best that modern science tells ;
And such a word of strong encouragement
As was a God-speed to me, drew the bolts
And sent the waiting vessel down the slides
To swing round joyful on the sea of purpose.
I do not dream, I work ; by day and night
My great end lies before me clear and plain
And draws all needful things into itself.
This voyage I come from now has served me well,
For now I see that of the westward isles
Gomera suits me best, for there I find
A natural harbour large and safe, much corn,
Abundant water-springs, and thriving flocks ;
'T is a fit refuge, or fit starting-point,
For vessels westward bound."

Then said Correa,

" But Herro is most westerly." And he :
" Her coast is steep, her roadstead is not good,
She has no springs nor woods nor thriving flocks,
She does not meet my many various needs.
Yet when I landed there, I felt indeed

The certainty of my scheme ; for when I stood
At sunrise on the cliffs, the perfumed air
Soft pressing on my face, and westward gazed
Across the blue sea on to the blue sky
Melting in light below the curving line
Of the round world, and not a shadow lay
And not a cloud across my onward path—
My bosom swelled with sense of coming joy.
As one who has been parted when a babe
From her who bare him—having ever held
Deep in his heart the knowledge of her love
And a great longing for her, knows at last
He shall at morn behold his mother's face—
Even so was I, expectant, strong, and calm,
Knowing the future." So Columbus spoke,
And midnight being near they ceased their talk,
And rising, slowly entered the still house.

After some weeks had passed he and his wife,
Drawn by his urgent wishes, went to dwell
A season in Gomera. Long the months
That they there sojourned, even until the child
Could run alone and shout his father's name.
Columbus then, having fulfilled his voyage
To the equator, and done all things else
That he had purpose in the Atlantic Isles

Returned to Lisbon, and they there abode
In their old home again, whence before long
He took his way to Iceland, to explore
The tides and seasons of the northern seas.
Now were the ends so long pursued attained,
And he stood ready to demand from kings
Response and aid ; but, standing thus prepared
Keen for his arduous task, a sudden blow
Shook his strong soul and well-nigh broke his heart.
A mortal sickness fell upon his wife,
Who after some few days of patient pain
Left him a lonely man, to bear his life,
Sore-burdened, knowing neither ease nor rest,
As best he might henceforward, stript and bare
Of her unfailing care, her tender love.

TO FELIPA, IN HER GRAVE.

I.

Farewell, my best-beloved ; low art thou laid,
And never smilest more, nor comest near
My table where I write, to call me dear,
Or lay thy cheek in silence on my head.
Yet, sometimes starting on my darkened bed,
In some far distant place I seem to hear

A soft sound like thy footsteps, and my ear
Awaits in sudden joy thy nearer tread.

Oh, wild and foolish fancies of a heart

Driven from all reason by its aching pain !
How much more wretched I when you depart

For that one moment's respite ! How more vain
The bliss that once I had ! Never again
Shall I her footsteps hear ; never again.

II.

Never again beside me in the street,

Never again beneath the summer trees ;

Nor when my ships return upon the breeze
In my great hour of triumph, wilt thou greet
My coming home with thy glad eyes and sweet ;

Nor wilt thou share my glorious destinies

In the fair lands beyond the western seas :
All joys and triumphs henceforth incomplete.
Oh, not mysterious Tartary nor Cathay,

Nor the vast Indies and Golconda's mine,
Are now my soul's horizon ! but, away,

Where far beyond, the borders dimly shine
Of that strange country, love, which now is thine,
Which draws my yearning spirit night and day.

CANTO IV.

IN PORTUGAL.

ON the old Mole of Genoa superb
 Stood Christopher Columbus once again.
The time being come to crowned heads to appeal,
Or proud republic—to his own city first
His princely scheme he carried, proud to lay
Before her feet the promise of the West :
Glory and treasure ; vast imperial rule ;
The blessing of the Church for heathen souls
Brought in to Christ ; the never-dying fame
For those who first should dare the boundless seas,
The wilderness of waters lying west.
But Genoa might not listen to his prayer
Nor grant to his entreaty ships and men
To win the whole for her, for she was sad,
Distressed by enemies, oppressed and poor ;
She might not give her treasure nor her strength
To new adventure, howsoever great,

However glorious. He but remained
To make more comfort in his father's home
And cheer the white-haired, tremulous old man
With his kind presence, and to Venice then,
A mistress of the sea, he bore his scheme.
But Venice also, burdened with her wars
And her oppressors, had no ear to give
To his bold prophecies ; and he returned
Again to Genoa to bid farewell
For ever to the city of his birth,
The hilly city of his boyish days.

To Portugal he made his next appeal,
And waited long in patience : the old king,
Whose earlier reign had seen her great advance
Along the paths of science, who had gone
With good Prince Henry hand in hand to make
Her place the first in maritime research—
And great discoveries also on the land—
Now waged a losing warfare with Castile
Engaging all his people and himself,
And Christopher's fantastic enterprise
Could take no hold upon the public mind.
But when Alfonzo died and to the throne
King John the Second came, the eager times
Of good Prince Henry seemed renewed again ;

The king with love of enterprise was fired
And sent out brave explorers ; some to seek
Amidst his wide Tartarian realms and hordes,
The old-reputed convert, Prester John,
In Middle Asia chief ; others went forth
By way of Egypt to the greatest towns
And most renowned, of India ; who returning
By Mozambique there heard the strange report
Of a great cape, the extreme southern point
Of Africa, and of vast seas beyond,
Where the Atlantic Ocean and the tides
Of India must be confluent. This great news
Roused in the king a stirring memory
Of Henry's great design, and fixed his mind
Round Africa to seek the Indian mines.
His glowing zeal aroused his people's heart
Into its old ambitions, and he urged
His learnèd men to fashion into use
The ancient astrolabe, which they with skill,
Musing and calculating, formed at last
Into that subtle, faithful instrument
Whereby the mariner afar from land
Learns from the sun or polar star his place
Upon the trackless waters undefined.
So the whole people with the king, once more

Were filled with longing for the ocean-ways.

In that wide-spreading fervour Christopher
Beheld his hour of promise, and at length
By strenuous efforts the permission won
To enter the king's presence and to speak
Freely of all his purpose and his proofs.
By his bold, glowing speech King John was stirred
Through every thought, a new ambition grew,
A passionate desire for this great scheme
As yet untried, suggestive of all hope,
And he hung spell-bound on the argument.
But when Columbus made his lofty claim
To rule in all lands where he should set foot
First of Christ's children ; and to hold such right
For all his heirs in perpetuity ;
To be entitled " Viceroy," and yet more
In his esteem, " The Admiral," and his sons
And his sons' sons for ever ; a great chill
Of pride and jealousy seized upon the king,
He turned against the offered enterprise,
He termed the thoughtful, patient, steadfast man
A grasping schemer, hot-brained, arrogant,
A visionary, and would hear no more.
But still the vision hovered round his thoughts,
He longed after the glory and the gold,

Could not forget the great majestic dream,
And knew it was not emptiness nor vain.
Twice he renewed enquiry, giving in charge
To Lord de Cazadilla, Bishop of Ceuta
And his chief learned men, to hear in full
From Christopher himself the evidence
And grounds of his belief ; and twice they met—
Once in a general conclave of the realm—
And twice declared the project wholly vain
And he who had imagined it, half crazed
By insolent pretence and lonely dreaming ;
Better to follow on the glorious track
Where Portugal already knew her way,
Had reaped rich harvest, and already won
A splendid fame ; by her Prince Henry loved
Who seemed from out his grave to point her on,
Praying her not to slight his cherished aims
And the long labours of his strenuous life :
And all the conclave chose the southern route.

Now some months after that great conference,
Up the steep city from her crowded quays
Columbus and his brother took their way,
Bartholomew being just come back from sea.
Tall was he, of a proud and manly port
And like his brother, but of sterner mien.

In their own tongue they talked, rapid and low,
With many an earnest gesture and knit brows,
Nor heeded those they passed : the sun shone down
His fiercest, but the water-bearer's cry
(Wheeling his painted barrel down the street
And ever calling " Water,") won no heed ;
The gay fadista with his gay guitar
Could get no hearing from them, and the beggar
Held out his hand in vain ; the courteous bow
Or greeting of acquaintance in the street
Received a scant response. Hastening along
Up to the old square called " Of the Two
Churches "

Where, being noon, the sacristan was gone
And the whole place deserted, they sat down
Within the shadows of a sculptured porch
And earnestly talked on.

Columbus spoke

With ever-gathering frown : " I said before
How the king's mind and fancy were impressed,
And musing often on the good he lost,
He was won over in an evil hour
To listen to my Lord de Cazadilla,
Who poured this poisonous counsel in his ears—
That he should send a ship out secretly

To seek my route, guided by my own charts,
My written plans and notes, which I had furnished
As I was bid to do, for fresh discussions—
And in an evil hour the thing was done.

“ A caravel went out on fair pretence
Of goods to carry to the Cape de Verdes,
Then once at sea endeavoured to work out
The courses learned from me. But God is just,
Their fleshly hearts unstayed by inward truth
Upon the wide and pathless waters quailed,
Unlike to Peter with his burning heart
Of faith and love within the feeble flesh.
Trembling they hastened back, loudly declared
There were no lands to win nor way to go,
And denounced me a false and ignorant man ;
The Bishop's adverse counsel was confirmed,
The judgment of the conclave justified.
Now never more will I give ear or trust
To this poor king, nor will I longer dwell
Here in this traitorous city. For long time
Has gallant, sunny Lisbon been to me
A place of sorrows ; now my days run on
And I am nigh on fifty years of age,
And yet I seem no nearer to my ends ;
I stay here but to greet thee and to tell

The burden of my spirit : I am bound
For England by Oporto, and I go
This very night from Lisbon secretly ;
King John is fain to speak with me again
And very jealous lest I find a friend
And better fortune in some other land—
Therefore in haste and secretly I go.”
Then said Bartholomew, “ No, go not now
To England, I have messages for thee
From Pedro and Sebastian. As we came
Up from the coast of Guinea with our load
Of slaves and gold-dust, and on board with us
Pedro Correa, we put in at Sagres— ”
Then exclaimed Christopher : “ And how is he,
My good Sebastian ? Never any man
Had better friend than he.”

“ Well, he is well,
Although his hair is white and he is bent
And his strength leaves him daily. Now he sends
His counsel to thee thus : to seek in Spain,
Of Ferdinand and Isabella, aid.
They are a noble pair, and being joined
In heart as well as power can move as one,
With every force and virtue twice endowed.”
“ But,” said Columbus, “ how should I approach

Castile and Arragon ? To England's king
I can get access through our countrymen
John Cabot and his sons, but in all Spain
Pedro Correa is my only friend."

"Aye, but Sebastian can procure thee friends,
He has acquaintance with two mighty lords,
La Cerda and De Guzman are they named,
Dukes of Medina Celi and Sidonia.
They have vast tracts of land along the coast,
Vessels and captains and a princely wealth
And minds as princely ; they will join thy scheme
With hand and fortune for themselves, or stand
Its sponsors for thee with the king and queen.
La Cerda chiefly is his hope for thee,
Correa knows him by report right well
And bids thee take Sebastian's counselling,
Who sends these letters to commend thee there.
Wherefore go not to England, but abide
A little here till some convenient ship
Shall sail to Cadiz."

"Aye, I will to Spain,
The good Sebastian helps me in my need,
It is a sign from Heaven. But I must go
Up by the Tagus as I have prepared,
For I have hired to take my boy and me

The master of a river-trading barge,
Who is both staunch and secret, and my friend ;
But at Abrantes I will change my course,
Cross to the Gaudiana and go south
And then take ship for Cadiz. But meanwhile
Go thou to England, brother, in my place,
Take to the king a map that thou wilt find
Amongst my papers that is destined for him,
And offer him my plan, my whole great scheme ;
The Cabots will receive thee for my sake
With every forwarding."

"Nay," said his brother,
"I cannot, Christopher, undertake it now
Even for thee, for I am pledged to sail
With Diaz on the southern route again,
King John already has ordained the voyage."

"Then it must be so, but on thy return
Make no delay, we cannot say how soon
This Spanish hope may fail me ; and meanwhile
See to some goods I leave here, charts and books ;
Those of most value to me I shall take,
And little else I have in all the world.
And now farewell." The two embraced and
parted,
Columbus to his house, Bartholomew,

When he had watched his brother out of sight,
Down to his ship beside the busy quay.

Again a little later that same day
The vesper bell was ringing in the church
Of All Saints above Lisbon. Thither came
Columbus and his son, for in the aisle
Stands the low tombstone where Felipa lies,
And Christopher has come to look his last
Upon her grave, and share for the last time
The vesper prayers at All Saints as of old.
The boy went in, his hands were full of flowers,
Of myrtle and of jasmine which he spread
With childish, mystic joy upon the tomb ;
His father lingered just within the door
And saw the altar all ablaze with light
Poured by the sunshine through the glowing panes
Of the west window, making bright the place
Where stood Felipa when his sudden love
Foreknew his wife, and her sweet voice and she
Took up their habitation in his heart.
The sacred rites began, Diego came
And drew his father towards the altar-rails
Among the worshippers ; above the quire
Behind a lattice, were the convent nuns
Singing and chanting as in former days,

But on Columbus' ear their singing fell
And was not music ; prayer nor blessing spoke
To him of consolation, and he rose
Glad when the rites were done. Diego went
Out with the rest into the evening light,
Nor missed at first his father's company.
He plucked the red pomegranate flowers, which
grew
Against the convent wall, he chased the birds
Settling amongst the trees, he turned to hear
The hoopoo's triple cry, and watched the ships
Drop slowly down the Tagus, and he heard
The songs and noises of the town below :
But when the ancient sacristan appeared
With his large keys, the boy went in again
And found his father stretched along the tomb
Upon his face, who, when he heard his son,
Rose slowly up with haggard countenance,
And stood before him. Then the child bewailed
The broken flowers, but Christopher replied,
" Kneel down, Diego, kiss thy mother's name
And say farewell to her, in all thy days
Thou wilt not find a love like hers again."
The wondering boy obeyed him, half afraid
Of the hoarse high-strung voice and tightened lips,

And then his father with a gentle clasp
Drew him away and went with heavy strides
Across the citron-field he knew of old,
And down a lonely place outside the town
Amid the gathering shadows of the night.

At last Diego : " Father, where dost go,
We have long passed the turning to the gates?"
" Down to the river child, 't will please thee well
To go out sailing in the starlit night,—
But hold thy peace now till I let thee speak."
Thus silent they continued on their way
Down to the water, where beside the bank
Was moored a river-barge laden in midst
With merchandise of Lisbon high up-piled ;
The master sat upon the bales, to him
Columbus made a sign and being answered,
Lifted Diego in and sprang on board.
The boatmen rose, unmoored the boat and stood
And rowed her slowly up the moving waste
Of black and circling waters, where the stars
Flashed in and out and quivered—towards the hills
Lying to northward low and dimly seen.
The master waited kindly on his guests,
Gave them of his rough fare and laid a cloak
To make the boy a bed, where soon he slept,

Whilst Christopher sat near with folded arms
In sleepless silence through the starlit night.
For there arose upon his inward thought
Sweet visions of the days of passionate love
Crowned by betrothal and its passionate joy ;
Then the short blissful years of wedded life
Made long by love renewed from day to day,
And all its constant cares of tenderness,
And the close nearer growth of soul to soul ;
And now he left the places thus made dear,
And went forth desolate of woman's care,
Of tender touch or kiss, for evermore :
The woe of widowhood was on his soul.

A light wind rose at dawn, the boatmen spread
Their large red sail and rested from their oars ;
The sun rose bright on the long barren range
Of steep Estrella, on the verdant isles
Shaded by weeping willows, on the fields
Whence rose on either hand the peasants' songs
Answering above the slowly gliding barge ;
And when Diego wakened up and laughed,
A soft light came upon his father's face
And they together made their matin prayers.
Three days and nights they sailed until they came
Into Abrantes ; thence without delay

Forward they went again. At first on foot,
Their coffers carried in a country cart
Light-railed, with wheels of solid circled wood
Creaking and groaning. Still by fertile fields
Awhile they journeyed, then through tracks of sand
And dreary moors where heath and cistus grew
High as the wheels, and with his broad, blunt knife
Their peasant-guide must cut them out a way ;
By myrtle growths, by solitary pines,
By quick and sparkling streamlets lay their road,
And ever as they went the crushing wheels
Made plants and herbage fragrant ; over hills
Rugged and bare they plodded. Weary days
And nights of little rest. The child was brave
And went along in patience day by day,
He ever had the best their food supplied.
He slept at night upon his father's arm,
And when sometimes the well-resisted tears
Came to his eyes, in secret, as he thought,
His father came beside him in the cart,
And told him stories of his early days
At Genoa, or Pavia, or at sea ;
But oft the play and chatter of the boy
Beguiled the father from his weary thoughts.
More pleasant times came in the chestnut woods

About Estremoz ; on the mountain pass,
And on the woody hills, rocks and ravines
By which they reached at last the rugged shores
Of Guadiana. Christopher here stayed
To rest the child, and that his purpose grew
To go on by the river both for speed
And greater ease in travelling, and he hired
An uncouth boat such as the fishermen
Used for their craft—no other could be found
In that wild place ; then he laid in their stores
For three days' sailing, took a man to row,
And they set forth upon their dangerous way
Down the swift flowing river. To Diego
The perilous voyage was pleasant ; when noon
came

They made their boat fast in some cool recess
And the boy climbed the rocks for flowers and
berries.

At night he set his simple snares for fish,
Such as frequent at night the shallow pools
Clear of the deep black waters that he feared ;
Often the boatman sang or told him tales,
And the boy wished the pleasant voyage would
last.

But on the third day's sailing, far ahead

The roaring of rough waters reached their ears,
On either hand yet higher rose the cliffs
And darkened overhead until they seemed
As newly rent apart, and at their feet
The narrowed river furious tore along
And broke in dangerous rapids down the rocks.
Even now the boat the restless movement felt,
And quivered and rocked dizzily and turned ;
With anxious toil they brought her to the shore,
And with much risk Columbus saved the boy
And got their coffers out, thankful at heart
His books and papers met no injury.

Here with much trouble he procured an ass
To bear the child and one to take their goods,
Going on foot himself, and painfully
Went down to Alcontim. Here broad and free
The river flows and safely bears its craft
Down to its mouth and port, Castro-Marim.
Their asses sold, they stood upon the bank
Waiting the barge to take them down the stream
And watching the sweeping river ; some slight
thing
Stirred in Columbus' mind and turned his thoughts
To old Sebastian, a great longing came
To go the more than hundred miles that stretched

From Alcontim to Sagres, and once more
See his old friend, but glancing round, his eyes
Fell on Diego, and he thought "No, child,
Thou art too tender for it, thou hast borne
Enough at this time of thy father's lot
Of toil and travel ; we will leave at once
This treacherous country and with hearts un-
crushed,
Go forth to seek good fortune elsewhere."

CANTO V.

PALOS DE MOGUÉR, JERÉZ, AND COR- DOVA.

BENEATH a sky of perfect, cloudless blue,
On board a little ship for Cadiz bound
Columbus and his son left Portugal.
Standing upon the poop they watched the shore
Grow slowly dimmer as they sailed away
From the rough rocks and breakers, and Columbus
At every moment felt his spirit rise
Released from cares immediate, and renewed
In hope and forward looking. Through the night
Those gracious skies that cheered their parting
changed
Pouring down rain and tempest, till at dawn
They helpless drove upon the Spanish coast
Far north of Cadiz, tossed upon the shore
Amidst the rocks and breakers till they struck.
“Now courage!” cried Columbus to the boy,

Whom drenched and faint he lifted from the ship :
“ Comes worst, comes best, after the storm the sun.”
Thus first they stepped upon the soil of Spain.

Late the next day, the wanderers going north
To seek for help at Palos de Moguér,
Missing their way, came to a gloomy hill
Crowned by a convent of Franciscan friars
To Mary of La Rabid dedicate.

Up the steep path beneath the closing shade
Of tall dark pine-trees wearily they climbed
The rugged stones, then came out suddenly
Close by the convent-front and into sight
Of the wide ocean lying still and fair
Beneath the clear light of the setting sun.
Down to the right was Palos by the Tinto,
The river of green waters, on the heights
Beyond was Huelva, and afar the cliffs
Of Portugal sloped melting to the west ;
Below they heard the waves in ripples break,
Making soft regular music on the sands.

“ O, father ! ” cried the child “ this must be
Heaven.”

They rested here, and at the convent-gate
Columbus begged for water and for bread
For the boy's supper, these the porter brought

With ready kindness and Diego sat
On the stone bench and ate the simple food.
Now at that time was Juan Pérez prior,
A grave and learned person, who had been
The queen's confessor in her early youth.
He, passing on his business through the court,
Beheld the strangers and forthwith came out
To give them greeting and enquire their news,
Whence they were come and whither they were
bound.

Columbus stretched his hand out towards the west :
" There am I bound. Some twenty years ago
I watched that setting sun, and vowed to bear
The Cross of my Redeemer on the waves
To the dark savage lands. In all that time
I have not once forgotten, nor delayed
To serve my purpose in all lawful ways ;
Then I was in my full and lusty prime,
Now I am in the years when strength of limb
Ere long must fail, when eyes must soon wax dim
And my ears duller, but my heart is young,
My faith is stronger, God above is just."
The prior made answer, praying of his guest
To open out the meaning of his words ;
Eager his lively spirit sprang to meet

The tale Columbus told, and there they sat,
Looking across the shining western waves
Wherein the crescent moon went slowly down,
And Christopher expounded proof on proof,
Thrilling his hearer with the glorious things
His strong imagination pictured forth
In words of fire—whilst darkness settled down
And on his knees Diego sat and slept,
For whilst they talked the boy had scrambled up
Into the well-known shelter of his arms.

They were the prior's guests that night and so,
For a day longer, and the simple friars,
To whom their coming was as a romance,
Cherished and cared for them, and Pérez said :
“ I would the queen could hear you ! but those
dukes

To whom you go will sure be helpful friends.”
And so they said farewell and came to Cadiz—
Cadiz that stands where once the city stood
And temple of her god, as may be seen
By her armorial bearings—Hercules
Contending with two lions—and the motto
“ Gadis Fundamentor Dominatorque.”
Cadiz, white Cadiz, standing by great tracts
Of flat and dreary salt-lands, but herself

Set steadfastly upon a rocky point
That stretched out northwards half across the bay,
Receiving on its stern unchanging front
The great Atlantic's furious assault,
Guarding behind its long sea-beaten ridge
A place of quiet waters safe and calm.

The two great dukes whose aid Columbus sought,
Were under arms and at the royal camp,
Leading their forces in the arduous wars
Which slowly pressed the Moorish people back
And now had left them but Granada's vale
And all that lies beyond to south and east :
There were Sebastian's letters sent to them,
And both wrote kindly to Sebastian's friend.
La Cerda prayed Columbus to abide
In a small Moorish mansion that he had
Near to Jeréz, and wait there until himself
From these long wars and court intrigues set free
Might come to be his host. Therefore at once
Columbus and Diego journeyed forth.
Through miles of golden vineyards lay their road,
And in the midst of all those glowing bowers
They found the little city known afar
By its tall palm trees with their feathery crowns ;
Some miles beyond it stood La Cerda's house,

Built on a low hill by the Guadaleté.

Courts, and light-pillared arches pierced and carved,
Whence hung the flowering creepers ; balconies
Looking across the stream and vine-clad slopes ;
Fountains and coloured pavements, made the home
Where Christopher and his Diego dwelt
For many weary months that dragged along,
Guests in a house without its lord—ill-served.

During those months of waiting, Christopher
Laboured at his old trade and taught his boy,
And when a store of maps and charts was made
They carried them together down to Cadiz,
To sell there to a man whose business lay
In charts and scientific instruments.
Gladly he took such work as Christopher's,
And many a learned long discourse they held ;
Columbus afterwards would seek his son
On the long sea-ridge, where Diego sat
And fished with slender line for the red mullets
Abounding in those seas, above his head
Sea-mew and snowy gannet swept and cried,
And Christopher stood by, his lonely soul
Cheered by the salt air and the sight of waves.

In the full summer to the Moorish house
Came home La Cerda of the tufted cheek—

Sign of his old and royal French descent.
Gay was he and a very gallant soldier,
Haughty, of fancy quick, and warm of heart ;
He took a lively pleasure in his guest
And often were they seen in deep discourse,
Sitting together in the balconies
Or slowly pacing the arched corridors,
Columbus telling all his scheme and proofs,
The Spaniard hanging on the glowing tale
Ardent and hopeful, but the help he gave
Was but fair promises, and still a home.
De Guzman came and listened, hoped and longed,
And also had Columbus to his house,
Treated him well, and opened out his heart
To hear him fully ; then both lords returned
To join King Ferdinand in the winter wars—
For through the great heats needful truce was made.

Slowly the months went by until in spring
La Cerda came again, and this time gave
His whole mind to Columbus, who so much
Did work upon him that he was resolved
To give up certain caravels for the voyage,
Saying: “ My forefathers were sovereigns once
Of the Canary Islands, and it seems
A natural thing for me to give you aid

In carrying out a grander thought than theirs.
In my own port St. Mary lie the ships
Ready for service, go down with your son
And see if they will answer to your needs.
With kindling eyes Columbus called his son
And they set forth together, riding mules
Richly caparisoned, from La Cerda's stalls,
And went down through the early heat of May.
Then as they rode, "See now," Columbus said,
"How summer opens both for Spain and me
And with the fragrance of the blossoming vines
Surrounds our way to glory. Never, boy,
Give up thy nobler, honest hopes till death ;
Though late, my summer comes, and in her gift
The autumn fruits unseen grow ripe and full."
They came to Port St. Mary where they found
The vessels lying ready ; carefully
Columbus searched them over, stem to stern,
Masts, sails and ropes, and anchors, and he saw
They were in every point well made and fitted,
New, strong, entirely suited to the use
He had for them. So with rejoicing hearts
He and his son went back.

Beside the board

After the evening banquet, lingered still

La Cerda and his guests, with jest and song
Passing the pleasant hours, when Christopher
Came quickly to his presence travel-soiled
And tired. La Cerda prayed him rest and eat
Ere talking with him, but Columbus stood,
And scantily thanking him, with glowing cheeks
And eyes that kindled from their very depths,
“ My lord,” he said, “ the caravels will do.
And when I weigh my anchors and go forth,
And when I come again triumphant home
On you the glory of my work will shine,
For now you give into my hand the key
Of greater conquests than by ancient Greek,
Hero or king, or Roman emperor,
Have ever yet been made. No less a thing
Than all the golden Ophir of the East ;
The wealth that gorgeous Solomon upbuilt
Into the temple of the living God,
Spread on its walls and carven cedar roof
And Holiest Holy Shrine. The lands whence
came

The Royal Magi with the royal gifts
They brought in homage to the Holy Babe ;
The lands where kings build palaces of gold,
Of sardonyx and jasper lay the floors,

Panel the walls with richly carven woods—
Sendal and camphor and black ebony ;
Whose dishes are of crystal set with gems,
Or of one emerald or amethyst,
As was that wondrous cup, the Holy Grail ;
Whose halls are lighted by great carbuncles,
Nor need the flame of torches nor of lamps,
Are fragrant with the smoke of frankincense,
Amber and musk and many a richer gum ;
Whose streams cast up the pearl and diamond.
These countries are the earthly Paradise
Told of by travellers, to whose eyes they seemed
The Eden whence original man was driven—
But that they are not, they are open still
And no terrific angel guards their gates,
Nor flaming sword forbids our entrance there.”

Then said one present, “ Fools may enter there,
What are those lands but the fools’ paradise
We heard of in our childhood? Travellers’ tales.”
Another said : “ We need not go so far
To find your fairy palaces,—ere long
When the Alhambra has been won, such things
Will all be ours in Spain.”

La Cerda then,
Who had sat leaning back at ease, his arm

Resting upon the table, now and then
Stroking his dark moustache and with a smile
Watching Columbus in his eager speech :
“ Grant it is so, my lord ; but since our land
Grows wider as we conquer, we may find
Uses for many treasures. Should we rest
Content with what the Moors have done for us
And build no more of towns or palaces.
My caravels may go upon the service
That they were destined for, and take my wines
In homely fashion to some neighbouring port.
But if,” and he sat up, “ we would adorn
Our land with beauty such as we may learn
Ev’n from our foes, who, heathens though they be
And deadly warriors, have the gift of grace,
If we would raise and keep great armaments
For further conquests, all these eastern stores
Would not be too abundant, and I think
None of us so desires a Spartan life,
Or leans so much to hermitage and cell,
But that a mine or so of gems and gold
Would sink into our land like rain on fields.”

Then said the former speaker : “ But why seek
By new strange ways these treasures ? Be content
To bring them as of old they have been brought—

Up the Red Sea, across the Syrian sands." . . .

Then Christopher broke in: "Those ways are
slow,

And Portugal imagines greater things
Than to pursue them ; she would have a route
Wholly her own ; she does not rest content
With her new stores in Africa, but thinks
Down that west coast to find an easterly way
More speedy to the old resorts, while I
Already know a quicker and sure route
Straight over the unhindered westward seas.
Our world is lesser than we think, the seas
Are narrower, farther spreads the solid land
Round to this side. No, nor shall Portugal
Slow-coasting, cautious, win the golden East."

The Duke no longer listened with a smile,
With brow compressed and darkening eyes he
spoke :

"This must be further thought on, for this scheme
Grows larger as we face it, no safe thing
It may be for a private gentleman
To come across the claims of crownèd heads,
Or take such vast and weighty enterprise
Out of the hands of monarchs. Let it be,
And I will speak to-morrow finally.

But sit you down, sir, rest yourself and eat,
We will talk further after a night's thought."

Columbus sat down wearily, he saw
La Cerda's mind was settled, and all hope
Of the good caravels was at an end.
Then in his thoughts he answered to himself :
" I have not said the best, I was so set
To rouse their earthly fancy and their greed
I did forget my highest argument,
Christ's service to the heathen. I am shamed,
And these two years of waiting are a waste.
Well, all this night I shall awake and muse
And with the morning rise to some fresh quest
In furtherance of my scheme." When morning
came

He rose determined to go straight to France
And there present his offers. Hearing this,
La Cerda, pacing with him to and fro
Under the poplars, praying him yet to stay
For answer to the letters he would write
To Isabella—urging her to take
Into her own hand for its furtherance
This scheme magnificent and wonderful,
And recommending to her favouring care
Him who had boldness to conceive the scheme,

Courage and skill to guide it to its end—
Thus to the queen at Cordova the duke wrote.

Below the southern slopes of the long range
Of dark Morena, by the Guadalquivir
Stands Cordova, red glowing in the sun ;
Her old walls, her cathedral old and huge,
And her bell-tower, survey the plains around
Fertile in country-wealth of fruits and corn,
And well adorned with many various trees.
In old days she was ravaged by Castile
From the Morescos and left desolate ;
But now her long-deserted streets and squares
Rang with the stir of warfare ; all round
Were stationed tents and barracks, stores of arms,
Stable and forage—round and within her walls
The troops of horses, the bands of armed men,
The gallant leaders, the camp-followers,
The noise of horn and trumpet, and the clang
Of arms and armour, sounded day and night.
Here Isabella ruled, and hence sent help
Into the south, where Ferdinand laid siege
To Moclin in Granada, and where else
The Spanish arms met Moslem. Here her care,
Her brave heart and her steady constant mind
Dealing with all this rude and warlike gear,

Maintained such perfect law, such smooth despatch
As a wise housewife uses in her home.

Hither Columbus at her summons came,
With eyes once more alight and soul on fire ;
But in the midst of all that warlike coil
He came not near the queen, nor could she give
One leisure hour to listen to his suit ;
Yet of his welfare mindful, him bestowed
With her comptroller of the treasury
De Quintanilla ; shortly afterwards
Departing to join Ferdinand at the camp,
And not again returned to Cordova
Till Moclin had surrendered to their arms.
Now weary to Columbus were the weeks,
The lingering slow suspense, the wasted time ;
But by De Quintanilla's kindness came
Good gifts of friendship, at his house he met
His well-known countrymen the Geraldini,
Who in his after troubles served him well ;
Also a gentleman of Cordova,
Don Pedro de Arana, and with these
He had congenial converse, and they shared
His cherished thoughts and plans. Both warm of
heart
And true of hand was Pedro, and, much loving

These talks with Christopher, often and again
Made him his guest ; the first time that Columbus
Came to his house, his sister Beatrix
Sat by the window at her tambour frame,
The sunshine falling softly on her head
And deftly moving hand. She little spoke,
But listened rapt to Christopher's discourse,
Looking up often with quick sympathy
In his ambitions and his sufferings ;
And whilst he talked, his thoughts were ever drawn
More and more frequently to see and note
Soft sparkling hazel eyes and gold-brown hair,
A clear pale olive skin, a changing cheek,
A mouth as sweet and curved as rose-leaves are,
A slow soft smile, a gracious form ; she seemed
Like boughs of orange-blossoms in the room.
So in the lingering months his weary heart
Drank eagerly a full refreshing draught,
He loved her and she him, and he had rest
And joy amidst his waiting.

Now there comes
News of the queen's return. Hark ! hark ! the
sound
Of triumph and rejoicing ! To the voice
Of horn and trumpet, towards the river-side

The royal pair ride on victorious,
Bringing their conquering army. At the gates
The bishop waits them, and before they cross
The bridge of many arches they dismount,
And side by side beneath a canopy
Borne by four acolytes, they pace along
To follow him with all their warlike train
In solemn, glad procession through the gates.
Columbus waited there amongst the crowd
And then first saw the calm benignant queen,
And Ferdinand, her bold sagacious spouse ;
He followed with the rest, and gave his voice
To the loud acclamations. On they went
Chanting and giving thanks, a crucifix
Carried in front up the cathedral nave
Amidst the columns multitudinous
Of jasper, porphyry, marbles various hues,
The spoils of Roman fanes from far and near
Brought by the Moors for building up the pomp
Of this great mosque for their own Moslem rites—
Now to a holier worship consecrate,
And this day draped with flags, with trophies hung.
Here, after silence whilst the sovereigns prayed
And priests and choristers assumed their place,
The warrior-lords and men-at-arms their rank,

And Cordova pressed in on every side,
Arose the chanted creed, the organ's boom,
And last the jubilant *Te Deum* loud ;
As the sweet smoke of incense filled the fane
Religious zeal inflamed the warrior's joy,
The mighty sound of thousand voices swelled
And echoed through the city and the sky.
Then in the splendid busy days that came,
Columbus had no hearing and no place,
And before many weeks the royal pair
Being advertised of trouble in the north,
Rebellion in Galicia, travelled there,
Swift to do justice ; and that wrong being quelled
And peace established, turned to Salamanca
Beside the river Tormes and set up
Their court there, being minded to remain
In the old city through the winter-time—
The city styled of old the lesser Rome,
By reason of its many stately domes,
Its large and noble buildings, streets and squares
Of ivory-coloured stone, arched, richly carved.

When Christmas time was passed, in the New
Year,

To Salamanca, now oft veiled in snow,
Came Christopher Columbus once again

Ardent and hoping, trusting to be heard
In this more peaceful season, and his hopes
Were well fulfilled. De Quintanilla's zeal
Engaged the close attention of the priest
Gonzalez de Mendoza, next in power
To the two sovereigns, highest in their trust,
Grand Cardinal of Spain. Opposed at first
To wild imaginations, he was won
To give attentive hearing and to seek
From Christopher himself a full display
Of all the scope and bearing of his scheme.
Of quick and subtle intellect, and fine sense
Of lofty aspiration, long he sought
Like hearing for him from King Ferdinand,
On whom he warmly urged the enterprise ;
And Ferdinand was gained at last to hear.
Columbus spoke his whole mind to the king
Who saw the worth and courage of the man,
The courage and the grandeur of his scheme,
And keenly longed to keep the whole for Spain.
But first, like John of Portugal, he charged
A learned junto to enquire and hear
So great a matter and pronounce to him
If it were good or no ; the queen's confessor,
De Talavera grave and erudite,

Practised in business, called the conference.

Meanwhile, one morning waiting at the court
To meet De Talavera, Christopher
Stood in a gallery window, and he watched
The snowflakes falling on the stones and melting
So soon as they were fallen, and while he gazed,
Listless, and thought how oft his efforts fell
And melted on the instant, there came in
The queen herself, Isabella, fair, full-sized,
A soft veil resting on her chestnut hair
And falling on her shoulders, her mild eyes
Blue and clear-beaming ; for all retinue
There followed her a good and noble dame
Prince Juan's nurse, Joanna de la Torre,
And two young maidens. When Columbus heard
The entering steps he turned, and struck with joy,
Swelling with heartfelt worship, he knelt down
And kissed her garment's hem. " I know you, sir,"
She said in her kind voice, " I know you well,
The Christopher Columbus who so long
Has sought our presence. Rise, sir, let me hear
All you have told already to the king."
So she sat queenly down, and he arose
And stood before her and laid bare his heart ;
For she was quick to understand and feel,

And her strong serious spirit answered his
As deep calls unto deep, as star to star
Utters his music. When he had explained
The scheme of his great voyage she replied :
“ Sir, I much marvel at your confidence ;
The great sea is so like eternity,
So vague and so unknown. Not near the land,
Not in your well-known courses can you fear,
You least, a seaman practised and assured—
But that great unknown ocean, as I say,
So like eternity from which no man
Returns—do you not fear it ? ”

“ Madam, no.

Think how the soaring falcon far from earth
Hangs motionless, committing all his weight
To the invisible ether ! Bathed in blue
Higher he soars again and higher still
And rests upon the air beyond our sight ;
Shall the bird’s courage shew a higher strain
Than mine a man’s ? ” Then she : “ But he yet,
sees

The solid earth below to whose firm rocks
He can return at will.”

“ True ; then behold
How the slight swallows take their distant voyage

Far out of sight of any well-known haunt,
Led on by God, and after many days
Coming at their appointed season home ;
Are not we men of greater value far
Than many swallows ? ”

“ Aye, but that unknown
Looms larger to our finer faculties ;
The swallows fear not, they obey the call
Of natural instinct ; we with reasoning minds
Look out into the dark and are afraid. ”

“ Oh, madam, is this world around more dark
Than that unknown which lies beyond the grave ?
Do we not see how dark the gates of death,
Yet gaze beyond them with our inner sight
To that immense unknown, with cheerful hope ?
Shall we give such a strong implicit faith
To that invisible world, yet shrink and fear
To travel farther on this earth we see ?
Does not God rule on ocean as on land ? ”

“ Indeed,” she said, “ you are right ; you are one
of those

To whom is given the pure and single eye,
The wise and childlike heart. ” She left him then,
Bidding the Lady Joan remain awhile
To entertain him, who addressed him thus ;

“ You have a most brave heart, sir, thus to meet
Our sovereign lady fearless ; did you not
In the least tremble when you found her here
Close by you without warning ? ”

“ No,” he said,

“ She seemed a representative of God,
Too good and strong to fear. Speaking with her
Was like a prayer, and all the best I have,
All the least good that hides within my heart,
Seemed brought by her to sunshine and new life.”

“ But,” said Joanna, “ will you have no dread
When you must stand before the learned men,
Astronomers, cosmographers, divines,
All of them deeply versed in every knowledge
Ancient and new, and apt in rhetoric ?

All the best wisdom of all Spain, and you
Almost without protection or support ? ”

“ I do not know,” he answered, “ when the time
Of trial comes no doubt the Lord will give
Into my heart the words that I must say.
Do I not work entirely by His will ?

Then all who are opposed to me are weak,
Being opposed to Him. I need not fear.”

CANTO VI.

AT SALAMANCA, CORDOVA, AND SEVILLE.

AT the Collegiate Convent of St. Stephen
The Conference was assembled. In a hall
Lighted by many windows straight and high,
Glowing with pictured glass ; around a board
Spread with a heavily embroidered cloth ;
Upon the carved and richly gilded chairs
Were set the learned men of all the realm ;
St. Stephen's prior and many of the monks,
De Deza, college teacher of theology,
And tutor to Prince Juan ; at their head
De Talavera learned, gentle, good,
Inclining not to new or secular things.
Near the high chimney by the smouldering logs,
Stood the Grand Cardinal, a tall grave man,
Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza called ;
His dark and fine apparel well became

His slight and delicate form ; in silken waves
Below his velvet cap his white hair fell
Around a pale and lofty countenance.

Upon Columbus' entrance all arose
Saluting him in ceremonious silence,
And gave no further sign ; thus he remained
Standing, with his rolled papers in his hand,
Like one awaiting judgment. Then arose
A murmur of displeasure, and Gonzalez,
A faint indignant flush upon his cheek,
Walked gravely down the long hall to Columbus,
Bowed courteously, and saying, " Honoured guest,
Whose presence is our honour, welcome here ;
Come to your rightful place," he led him up
To sit upon De Talavera's right,
Who met him with true Spanish courtesy,
Though veiled indifference, and entreated him
To set forth for their hearing all his scheme,
And all the details of his argument.

Columbus rose, noble his upright form,
Noble his face, whereon a quiet pride
Brought a slight red and lighted his grey eyes ;
His simple raiment seemed to suit him well,
His close white hair and strong worn countenance.
De Deza watched him kindly, some looked on

With curious interest, some with hostile scorn.
For who was this, a seaman, to come forth
Asserting things forbid by Holy Church
And unknown to her science? Who was this,
A stranger, an Italian, to intrude
Into the councils of this powerful realm,
And seek to draw her from her great affairs,
And take her treasure for fantastic ends?
Columbus spread his charts upon the board,
And compasses in hand began to speak.
In cold and measured tones at first he spoke,
For well he knew how little love was there
For him the stranger, neither of old blood,
Nor learned in the learning of the schools.
How little love for generous, daring zeal
In things unknown and new; but whilst he spoke,
And step by step led his great argument,
The possible future grew so bright and clear
Before his inward vision, that his words
Waxed warm and eloquent as of one inspired
And confident of his hearers; his eyes flashed
And his voice rang musical. But whilst he spoke
Of his great voyage, and how he should attain
To countries on the far side of the globe—
Opposed, perhaps, exactly to the spot

Where now they sat consulting—he was met
With scorn and ridicule. Some heard convinced,
But others quoted ignorant books of old,
Writings of times when science was unknown,
And he must bend to answer. Patient, grave,
He argued with this superstitious talk,
Then was accused of heresy and contempt
For Holy Scripture, which had plainly said
The earth lay flat beneath the arching skies
And thus had God created them.

He said :

“ But Holy Scripture teaches of our souls,
And of our souls’ concerns, not of those things
That with our natural senses we can learn
And are left free to learn ; God in His grace
Has given the means to know, will He forbid
To use those means and knowledge ? He needs not
A level earth, a semi-spherical sky,
To help His love to men ; He can bestow
His many varied blessings on His sons
Whether they dwell upon a level plain,
Or on the sloping surface of a sphere ;
Salvation for our souls can find our souls
Wherever in the body we may be.
Whatever is created, that is God’s—

Howso it is created, that He did—
Wherever He has placed us, we are His—
And we may trust His world as we trust Him.
Can it be possible to take our ships
Far out of sight of land, and fear no harm
Though Spain invisible be left behind,
And Palestine be far beyond our view—
Yet dangerous and impossible to sail
As many miles upon the like salt sea
Straight out from land to westward, for no cause
But that no man hath done the like before?
If on the rounded seas we safely ride
Within invisible boundaries, need we fear
To go upon the rounded waters forth,
Onward and onward till we come again
To our own continents? Nor need we fear
A long and desolate voyage, for it is known
There lie upon the mid Atlantic seas
Islands convenient for the seaman's need,
Antilles and Cipango, rich in gems,
Wealthy in gold, and furnished well with woods,
With streams and flocks, shelter and pleasant food.
Thus we may go refreshed upon our course
Round to old Asia's shores and fair Cathay,
The lands by Marco Polo seen, and told

In his own book which I myself have read.”
Here once again the storm of ridicule
And angry opposition broke around
And he was forced to silence. He remained
Amidst them as a rock amidst the sea,
Which neither feels the tossing of the spray,
Nor yields beneath the onset of large waves
Beating with blows of iron. But no calm
Came to the Conference, and they broke up
No judgment formed, no answer possible.

In spring the sovereigns travelled south again,
And Ferdinand led out a mighty force,
All the best chivalry of Spain, with all
The newest means of warfare, to besiege
Veléz near Malaga. Columbus stayed
In Salamanca, hoping yet to win
Some answer to his suit, and stayed in vain ;
De Talavera, made a bishop now,
Cared little for these matters, and was called
To follow Isabella ; the Grand Cardinal
Was gone already, and of small avail
Was it for Christopher to make delay ;
But he a while delayed for still De Deza
Remained at Salamanca, and with him
Columbus spoke much, and a hearty love

Arose between the two. Thus it fell out
That when in summer he prepared to leave
For Cordova, he was summoned to the camp
Now stretched round Malaga from shore to shore :
Strong and fair Malaga, of radiant skies
And life-inspiring air. All things he saw—
The gorgeous busy camp, with silken tents
Set for the sovereigns, the rich country round,
Grape-fields and hills, and mountains crowned with
snow,
Abundant glowing flowers, abundant fruits,
The blue, blue sea—these things expressed the hopes
That filled his heart when summoned to the
camp—
To wait, and fight and see the splendid days
Of desperate victory ; and still to wait
And to return to Cordova.

Whilst he stayed
In the fair city midst the musical pomp
Of royal prayers and thanksgiving displays,
He saw the driving out the conquered Moors,
Men, women, children, sold to slavery ;
And he saw also all the mournful troop
Of hunger-stricken Christians wild and pale,
Trembling and weeping, scarcely feeling saved.

Amidst these things another noble dame
Became his friend, the Marchioness of Moya,
Friend of the queen from girlhood, and the spouse
Of her true servant Andrea Ferrár—
And much he owed to her in after years.

Returning with the court to Cordova,
Columbus as he slowly rode along
Turned often in his thoughts to Beatrix,
Their coming meeting, and his ties to her,
And often also there arose the thought
Of Isabella the unblemished queen.
Thus shame fell on him, and a deep remorse
Grew in his heart into the stern resolve
To break those ties, and part from Beatrix.
Hence, come to Cordova, he made no pause
But hastened to her with a breaking heart,
For her the most but also for himself.
At his first entering she was not there
But in the neighbouring chamber, where she hid
Her babe that it might be a glad surprise
On his returning home ; and as he stood
She came in suddenly. “ My love, my love ! ”
She cried with clinging arms : “ Oh, happy hour !
Oh, unexpected joy ! ” He slowly said,
“ It is a mournful meeting, Beatrix,

I have no joy of it nor wilt thou have
When I have spoken to thee." " Oh, my heart !"
She cried, and drew away. " What dost thou say ?"
" Sit down," he answered, " were I warm and young
I should kneel to thee in my wild remorse,
And sob my errand out in burning tears,
But my remorse is stern and lies too deep
For passionate show. I own that I am bound
By natural ties of right, and mutual love,
To wed thee, Beatrix, yet am I come
To say it cannot be." She laid her hands
Locked, flat upon her knees, her eyes grew large
And light with terror, and as set as stone.
" 'T were vain for us to wed, my life belongs
To my great undertakings ; house nor home
Have I to give thee nor the centred love
A tender husband should. Yea, I am called
Am bound as much to live a celibate
As any shaven, dedicated monk.
'T is God himself has called me, and in sin
Oh, Beatrix, not even for love's sake
Would we remain. We two have deeply sinned,
And we must both repent." She, with white lips :
" Yes, we have sinned, we will repent ; I bow
My neck to meet the blow. Heroes of old

When they set forth on some great enterprise
Were wont to shed propitiatory blood ;
I am thy lamb of sacrifice. But go,
Be quick, let the blow fall at once.”
“ Poor, tender lamb,” he said, “ Oh, sacrifice,
Unblessing and unblessed ! When I shall see
In some far-off and slow approaching time
My life’s reward before me, I shall feel
I go to meet it right across thy heart.”
He laid his hands upon her head, then bent
And kissed her brow : “ For thy dear love God
 bless thee,
And on thy death-bed, if thou canst, forgive.”
Then turning, stern in sorrowful shame, he went
Forth from her face forever. She remained
Listening, and heard his steps to the stair-head
And down the staircase and across the court
And in the street—then silence. Then she knelt,
And threw herself along the floor, and cried
“ Poor, tender lamb indeed ! Weak, trusting heart !
But yet as proud as any crownèd queen !
Now am I left, and I must rear my babe
In bitter shame, but shame less bitter far
Than be a wife unwished-for, and endured !
He knew not of the babe, nor never shall,

Nor never shall he meet me face to face.
Oh, God be with him whereso'er he goes !
And if I cannot yet forgive, I pray
God bless his goings out, his comings in,
Bless him by day and night, in life and death,
And oh, may God forgive him, I can not."

Close upon this came De Arana home
From a long absence ; Beatrix had gone
For shelter to a convent, and he went
To Christopher in great wrath, and told him all.
Then sad days followed ; Christopher in vain
Wrote long and sorrowful letters full of prayers
That Beatrix would see him once again
And let him speak ; she would not see him more.
She would not read his letters nor receive them.
Then through her brother urgently he prayed,
That she would set his former words aside
And be his honoured and beloved wife.
But when her brother came back, in his arms
Bearing the infant, thus he spoke her mind :
" She says she will not listen to your prayer,
She will not marry with you to be left
A sad deserted wife, nor will she wed
To have your company by keeping you
From your own course, long chosen, long pursued,

And know you ever longing, ever sad,
Until perhaps you hate her in your heart.
But this she asks, to keep the boy with her,
To breed him up in nobleness and truth,
And in the love and honour of your name,
Till he be fit for a man's stronger hand."

Columbus then: "For her sake and for his
Let him go back to her—and for my own.
For even this small atonement is again
To take from her far more than I can give.
My sin is very great! She trusted me
With her whole heart, and I—I knew too well
I could not love again with my old love
Nor give another wife the inner place
And foremost in my thoughts. I knew I stood
Pledged hand to foot to go on with my work,
Nor for long years if ever more, might find
A home, and take a wife to make it blessed.
My sin is very great! God will requite her,
For henceforth to my last days I shall bear
The sting of my injustice in my soul."

He ceased, and bowed his head upon his arms.
Then added, "I will send from time to time
Such monies as they need." He ceased again,
And De Arana went out with the child.

About this time Columbus waited long
Some tidings from the sovereigns, and meanwhile
Took up his former avocations, worked
Hard for his living, and trained up his son.
He heard from Genoa long-expected news
Of his old father's death, also from Sagres
That his good friend Sebastian was no more ;
Bartholomew with Diaz had gone forth
Down the west coast of Africa ; Diego
Worked for his bread at Genoa. In his cares
His son was his companion and dear friend ;
But one day waxing listless, he went forth
To muse alone and sauntering slowly on
Along the city's massive, mud-piled walls
He looked across the plains so lately shorn
Of their abundant harvest, and his thoughts
Filled with the memories of the days of old,
His college life, the long bridge at Pavia,
And the wide-spreading corn fields, and he said :
“ Ah, now as then I weary of the land !
The city life is like a darkening mist,
The soil has no kind pressure to my foot,
The trees become to me as prison-bars,
And often through the night in sleep I hear
The wild free sea-winds and the wash of waves.

Sore, sore it is, this sickness of the soul."

Then wandering farther he came near the gate

Leading out to Placentia, by the palms.

"How fair and straight they rise, above my head

Hanging their arching feathers ! It is said

The first of these were set here by the hand

Of the first Moslem king, who brought the plants

From his far native Syria. There have passed

Seven hundred years since they were reared with
care,

That he might sit beneath their shade at noon,

And listen with closed eyelids till the airs

Soft stirring in the rustling fronds would seem

A whisper from Damascus—or at morn,

When rising sunlight filled the tender green,

Think that he woke in Syria. And to me

Old dreams are murmuring in these swaying leaves :

The burning Syrian plains, the flashing arms

Of Frank and Saracen, of eager hearts

Pouring their best blood freely to win back

Christ's venerated tomb from Paynim hands.

Ah, Genova, Genova ! not for thee alone

In the old boyish days I yearned and dreamed,

My hilly city standing by the sea ;

For Zion also on her Hills of praise,

Her hills of solemn sadness, where she wept
Above the Holy Tomb. Still do her foes
Oppress her, still her sorrows cry for help—
Does no king turn to hearken? Does none keep
For her his weapons ready? The strong thrill
Of my old longing dies not in my heart.
Hope, O Jerusalem! till the years fulfil
Their lingering promises, and from the West
I bring my vessels freighted with the gold
Of ancient Ophir. Then I shall lead forth
A mighty armament, a new crusade
To win thy heights, and scatter far and wide
Thy enemies and oppressors. Then shall rise
Over the tomb beloved a carven roof
Wondrous in beauty; and where stood of old
The Temple in its splendour, shall be built
Another Temple, like the first to shine
Gold-roofed before the morning, seen afar
More glorious than the sun-rise, and Christ's name
Will sanctify its glory. But not now,
Now Christ Himself has set another task
And for His love I spend my eager heart
In idle waiting, and my golden years
Are spilt like water on the desert sands."

The long weeks passed, slow waned the year's
last days

When Diaz came from his great southern voyage
To Lisbon home, and thence Bartholomew
Wrote to his brother all their history.
How they had gone to Guinea to explore
The westward country, and continuing south,
Passed through the burning zone, and onward
sailed

Through cooler temperatures along a coast
Sandy and flat and barren, without sign
Of bay or harbour, till their weary eyes
Craved for some rocky point or cliff-bound shore
Though sentinelled by breakers ; how at last
The coast became more rugged, and the air
Subject to sudden ever-changing winds
Through which they tacked on wide divergent lines,
Till one day, beating eastward, through the mists
Which rolled ahead, they saw a mighty cliff
Raising its straight horizon to the sky,
And knew it for the uttermost south point—
The extreme end of Africa—that cape
Whereof King John was long ago informed
By his own messengers, who had explored

For him the eastern coast. In joy and awe
They upward gazed upon the wall-like rock,
Ascending sheer at least two thousand feet
Above the fiercer congregated storms
Around it ever raging, which forbade
All further progress. Hence did Mendez name
That place the Cape of Tempests, but King John
Looking beyond the narrow present time
Gave it for name the Cape of Hope and Promise,
For he declared the way was open now
To navigate the south route to the East,
And before long, no doubt but his good seamen
Would hold their own against whatever storms
The waves or heavens could furnish. Then went on
Bartholomew : " Brother, hadst thou been chief
Instead of Mendez, we had made our way
Past every danger, and triumphant borne
The flag of Portugal through the Indian seas."

Columbus read this letter with great joy.
All his old liking for the zealous king
Rose up within him, and he wrote at once
To ask his mind about the western route,
And if he would not now hold out his hand
To bring him back, and give him hearty aid
And win both ocean highways round the world

For Portugal alone. King John replied
With cordial invitation to his court ;
The King of England also at this time
Prayed, in a letter writ with his own hand,
A visit from him—for Bartholomew
Had gone to England bearing to the king
The map Columbus gave into his charge
So many years ago, and had displayed
His brother's mind and aims. But neither king
Gave clear pledge of assistance, and once more
The Spanish sovereigns bade him soon expect
Some final treaty, and with liberal hand
Provided for his journeyings to and fro
And waiting on their leisure. Thus three years
Went by in the old fashion : king and queen
Still making promises of speedy aid,
Still swept away by many great affairs
Quick following each on each—domestic wars,
Marriage of children, business of the realm,
Administering of navies on the seas,
Both on the ocean and the midland sea ;
And ever like a river running on
Through all else, the hard warfare with the Moors ;
As when to sturdy Baza they laid siege
Through six months' hard resistance, and Columbus

Served them in arms, a soldier good and true.

Through all Columbus waited, through all hoped
Firm and courageous for a better day
When pause should come from festivals and wars,
But ever hoped in vain. De Talavera
Had no love for those fanciful, vague dreams;
Earnest in present action, and for ends
To him, a churchman, of far higher worth,
He put aside the task continually,
Nor called the Conference to meet again.

Columbus waited on with weary heart
At Cordova, where his son Diego lodged—
Now a tall youth and daily at the schools
A sedulous student—when the king and queen
Prepared with all their gathered energy
For the one last great effort, the last siege
Of the whole war, that with the victory
Over Granada—citadel and palace,
Metropolis and home, and last resort,
Of the Moresco kings—would end the strife.
Columbus knowing well how long and hard
That noble city might resist, once more
Wrote to their majesties, claiming quick reply,
Insisting on his absolute right to know
On what terms they would help him to his voyage.

Then as before the Conference was called,
And as before declared the whole scheme vain,
And Christopher Columbus a vain dreamer
Asking rewards no sane man would conceive.
But still the good friends that he had at court
And some few members of the learned Junta,
By their persuasions gained thus much for him,
That the reply the Conference had made
Should not be final, but that when the siege
Was well concluded and the Moors expelled,
Their majesties would instant send for him,
And enter into treaty for his scheme.

Now Christopher's sore heart could not receive
This answer through another, and he went
At once to Seville to inquire himself,
To ask from the two sovereigns face to face
If this were all the answer they would give ;
And when they told him it was even so,
This message was their message—silent, cold,
He went out from their presence. Passing on
From one great antechamber to another,
With rich carved work and tapestries adorned,
Or crimson leather hangings tooled and gilt,
And looking out upon the marble courts
Where orange-trees and light pomegranates stood

By fretted arch and slender colonnade,
He found De Talavera, in a group
Of noblemen and ladies amongst whom
Was the queen's friend, the Marchioness of Moya,
And he was saying : " One would think him mad !
How should a low-born Genoese assume
A right to seek the presence of the queen ?
Who is he, to refuse to take from me
The royal message ? What is he, to urge
Such personal importance with the sovereigns
That they must answer him with their own lips ?
And answer what ? Such wild fantastic schemes
As might inflame a dreaming schoolboy's brain,
Who slights his proper task to feed his mind
With fanciful legends and ingenious tales
Pretending to be worthy all belief
As records of true travel, Marco Polo
Being the wildest dreamer of them all.
For such things to disturb her majesty !
He has lost all discretion, he is mad ! "

Then Christopher made pause as he passed by :
" Do you, my lord, then measure a man's wit
Only by that you do yourself approve ?
Is all that lies outside of your own thought
But madness ? I am well used to the charge,

The little children mock me in the street,
Touching their foreheads with a glance at me ;
'T is older tongues have taught them, and I think
I must be mad to linger here despised,
Deluded, slighted. If so, 't is my heart
That goes aside from reason, that has set
Its deep, devoted trust upon a queen,
Not queen alone by crown and sceptred hand,
But a most sovereign woman, unsurpassed
In every virtue ! 'T is my heart has borne
For her these scorns, these heartburnings, this waste
Of my good years in waiting. To serve her
Was my intent, to bring to her the glory
Of my great voyage fulfilled, to honour her
Who has been ever royally good to me
And from her loftiness has cheered my life
Like a kind summer day, and led me on
To a yet stronger confidence in myself
And in the greatness of my enterprise.
Would I for any other have refused
The offers of King John of Portugal ?
Or have stayed here when favour waited me
In France and England ? When I came to Spain,
I waited two years on your noble Dukes
De Guzman and la Cerda. Promised then

Vessels sufficient, good ships by La Cerda.
Just at the very moment of success—
When in a few weeks or days I might have sailed—
He drew his promise back that I might give
My projects to Castile. Five years ago !
And I am here still waiting on Castile.
I made myself at heart a son of Spain,
Have carried arms with honour in her wars,
Have gone where I was summoned, and have borne
Repulses many, oft have lost the time
And opportunity of needful work
For my sons' sustenance ; but for help of friends
The boys had lived untaught, and barely fed ;
Yet worse than this, the golden hours fly fast,
And before long adventurous Portugal
Will win the East round Afric's stormy cape,
And she, or other nation of swift foot,
Will cross before me to the sunset shores
Which half my life have drawn me as the moon
Leads the tides after her. I am not mad
Except in lingering here, and now I go
With freshly glowing hopes to other lands.”
Then bowing with cold courtesy, he went
So quickly none could stay him. There ensued
A silence, then the Marchioness exclaimed :

“ Was ever man so steadfast and so brave !
Spain does but ill to lose him from her soil.
I knew him first at Malaga years ago,
And ever as my knowledge of him grew,
Regard and admiration likewise grew,
And a great kindness towards him. He is good,
Of noble heart, of an unflinching will,
Under injustice self-sustained and calm ;
And of imagination glowing, grand.
If I were you, my Lord de Talavera,
I should have prized and cared for this great man
As a rich jewel for my sovereign’s crown ;
We may repent some day that we have lost him.”

CANTO VII.

AT PALOS DE MOGUÉR, GRANADA, AND DEPARTURE.

FROM Seville back to Cordova, in haste
Columbus came ; he took a long farewell
Of his good son Diego, brought away
Little Fernando not yet four years old,
Thinking to lodge him with his friends at Huelva,
And set his face in earnest to leave Spain
And seek in France a surer, readier aid.

To Palos de Moguér he bent his course,
Expecting then at Huelva to get news
Of De Arana's brother, in whose care
He had it in his mind to leave his son.
Arriving at the convent on the hill,
Deeply the prior was troubled by their news ;
Much grave discourse they held ; the prior's
friend,
Garcia Fernandez, a wise leech of Palos,

Came up to hear the stranger's marvellous scheme,
To him as wise as marvellous, and next day
Martin Pinzón was brought, his fellow-townsmen,
Greatly renowned, amongst a race renowned
For daring seamanship, for worth and skill—
Who also listened, thoughtful and convinced.
These and some others from the little port
Came often to the convent and would sit
Late into midnight in their earnest talk.
Unwilling were they all, and most the prior,
That Spain should lose the project, and he
prayed
Columbus to remain, whilst he should write
To Isabella, praying, urging her
Not to forego this glory for her crown ;
Pinzón besought him, and with open hand
Offered the cost of this renewed delay,
Of messengers and journeys to the court,—
And Christopher, not unwilling, was convinced.
Pérez prepared his letters, and they chose
For messenger a pilot of the coast
Well known for faithful service, skilled and brave,
By name Rodriguez. Willingly he went
Upon this errand, for he, like the rest,
Loved and revered the great adventurer.

'T was strange to him, who scarcely in his life
Had travelled so far inland as to lose
Sight of the open sea, to journey on
Some seven score miles and never hear the tide,
Nor see the foaming billows, or brown mists
Banked on the far horizon. Not at Seville
Was the court stationed, but amidst the camp
Before Granada, where the good queen's wish
Had newly raised a city on the plain
That through the siege due order might be kept
And all the army and the numerous court
Find lodging suitable. Her people's love
Wished it should bear her name, but she would
not,
And in her modest and religious thought
Christened it Santa Fé.

Towards this place

Through the wide valley of Granada rode
Rodriguez ; far off shone the snow-topped heights
Of the Nevada's long and lofty range,
Descending in ravines and rocky woods
Of pine and oak and chestnut ; far below
Olive and sugar-cane and fan-leaved palm,
Aloe and cactus, and such glowing fruits
And gorgeous flowering-trees as brought to mind

The southern islands and their spicy scents—
Filled plain and grove and the soft autumn air
With joy and wonder ; by light-springing mosque
Or cheerful village, sparkling fountains sang,
The birds not less rejoicing clamour made,
The rivers rippled, and no mournful tones
Or breaking roar of ocean waves were heard.
Along this lovely plain he travelled on,
Beheld at last the roofs of Santa Fé,
And over these, queenly and arrogant
Granada, seated on her rocky hills
And spreading down amongst them. Red and
square

The towers that rose above her to the south,
Threatening and gloomy, strong for long defence,
He knew for the Alhambra ; not a sign
Was on their outer walls of all the grace,
The loveliness and luxury, the costly art
That they enclosed—as on the uncouth lips
Of some harsh featured minstrel dwells the song.

The simple pilot, brought before the queen,
Delivered up his missives ; these were read
By her in wonder, and her spirit turned
Kindly and full of reverence to the thought
Of the good Pérez who had watched so well

With fatherly kindness over her young soul,
And she sent answer praying him to come
At once to Santa Fé, for open speech
On all these matters with the king and her.
Patiently in the convent by the sea
Columbus waited ; many weeks went by
Before there came a summons from the queen,
And therewith her own promise, and the king's,
That they would take the enterprise in hand,
Furnish the needful means without delay,
Monies, and ships, and men, and send him forth.
Also the queen sent for his comfort gold,
That he might buy himself a goodly mule
To travel as became him, and attire
Suitable to her presence ; so he went,
Deeply resolved that this time was the last,
Yet full of hope once more ; with the good friars
He left Fernando, and went forth alone.

About midwinter, in that gracious plain
Of Andalusia, where no wintry cold
Or fiercest summer heats are ever known—
The Vega of Granada—on one day,
The second of the year, in mournful pomp
The proud old Moorish city yielded up
Her keys, and opened wide her carven gates

To her great conquerors, and Columbus stood
Nigh to her gates and watched. First entered in
Gonzalez de Mendoza, the Grand Cardinal,
With him a troop of grey-haired veterans
Who had borne arms in all the Moorish wars,
And thus were chosen as by natural right
To take possession of the citadel,
The Watch-tower of the Alhambra. On the plain
Not far outside the walls, the king and queen
Waited in state : set upon noble steeds,
Nigh to the river Genil they were placed,
Themselves in richest armour, and their steeds
In gold-embroidered trappings ; far around,
Their court, their nobles, and their army shone
Resplendent in accoutrements of war
And festive habits ; underneath some trees
An altar stood, and priests. Silent all watched
Whilst the Grand Cardinal and his chosen troop
Wound slowly up the city, and until
In melancholy state the Moorish prince
Before his household guard rode slowly forth
Carrying the city keys. Come to the king
He would have left his horse, to give them kneeling,
But Ferdinand would not that a vanquished foe,
A king, should be so humbled, and he brought

His own horse close to that of Boabdil,
And so received the keys. Still silently
The Moorish prince saluted him, rode on
To pay like reverence to the queen, and passed
Through all the silent army to that hill
Whence he looked back to weep his bitter tears
For lost Granada. When the Moors had passed,
The queen rode close to Ferdinand, and they sat
Speechless, and the great multitude was hushed,
All gazing on the Alhambra. Just at noon,
Upon the great red Watch-tower sudden gleamed,
Beneath the mid-day sun a silver star,
The mighty Crucifix, whose solemn light
In every city conquered from the Moors
Had led the entrance of King Ferdinand,
Now by the hand of the Grand Cardinal
Set up in sign of victory ; lower waved
The banners of Castile and Arragon.

Then sank the whole great host upon their
 knees,
The queen's glad eyes turned to her royal spouse,
The priests loud sang the ancient hymn of praise,
Te Deum Laudamus, the High Mass
Was solemnly performed, and then burst forth
From the uprising people with one voice :

“ Glory, glory, glory,
Glory to God in the highest ;
The Lord God of Sabaoth,
The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.”

And the whole host, led by the king and queen,
Moved slowly up, and singing as they went
Into the queenly city, by the ways
The least frequented, that the conquered folk
Might shun their conquerors. Beneath the trees
Where he had stood, Columbus still remained,
And watched the king and queen ride stately
through

Granada's open gates, and all the press
Of people following. “ Great their lot,” he said,
“ Solemn and great, for ten years they have striven,
And now they enter in to their desire
And drink the full cup of a lofty joy.
I twenty years have striven, have watched and
toiled—

Shall not I also consummate my life
As they have done ? and some day drink a cup
As full and richly crowned ? They in their prime,
I in the fading autumn of my years.”

A month had passed, and in the royal tent
At Santa Fé, before the king and queen
And a small council of their trusted friends,
Columbus stood. He had been summoned there
And they were met, with full intent to make
An end of indecision, to accept
On some terms his proposals, and to frame
The final treaty between Spain and him.
He had argued once again the wealth and fame
His enterprise should bring ; he had let loose
His fancy in poetic thought and phrase
Of all the unknown beauty he should find ;
Then, his heart swelling with his deep desire
That all the world should come to the true Faith,
He broke out full of passion : “ Oh, my queen !
You have given blood like water, gold and blood
To drive out from your land the Infidel,
You have spared neither time nor weariness,
Nor your best thought and fervour of your soul,
To bring the Moslem scorners in to Christ—
And the Most High has blessed your offering :
Will you not give the little that I ask,
A few ships and perhaps a hundred men,
To win whole nations into the great fold ?
And to bring treasure back that shall ensure

An absolute victory in the Holy Land ?
Madam, your heart is tender, and your soul
Full of religion —from this Santa Fé,
In sight of yonder silver crucifix,—
Spare not to carry further your good work ;
Nor having done such great and holy things
Rest as contented, when yet further heights
Of sacred enterprise beseech your feet.
Madam, and you, O king, the Catholic,
I vow the cost of the whole armament
That shall be needed for the Holy Land,
To rescue and to keep for evermore
The sacred places of our one true Faith,
If you will aid me now.” He paused, his cheek
Glowed, and his eyes were kindled. The king
said :

“ Our heart is with your scheme, but your demands
For power and rule over those lands you seek
Are too extreme. Yet, let us hear again
The utmost of your claim.”

Columbus then :

“ I claim, O sovereign, you to represent
As absolute vice-ruler everywhere
That I shall make discoveries of lands—

Or smallest island or wide continent—
Westward, or north, or south, and there to rule
As viceroy, answerable but to you,
To my life's end ; and after me my sons,
And my sons' sons in regular descent,
So long as one male heir remains to me ;
And I to bear the title ' Admiral ' ;
And my sons also to my latest heir ;
And I to take one-tenth of all I find,
Silver, or gold, or pearls, or precious stones,
Spices, or other products of the soil,
And every sort and kind of merchandise ;
And all this clear of cost : and since my foes
Have made base accusations, and a mock
Of my demands, saying I seek to take
Advantage only not to share the cost,
I shall have right to furnish one-eighth part
Of whatsoever my first voyage may cost
For its complete providing. This I ask,
O king and queen, and less I will not take."
The king leaned back with gesture quick and
proud :
" It is too much, sir, you demand too much."
The queen looked troubled, and De Talavera
Came quickly forward, speaking ere she spoke :

“ It is too much, sir, I must plainly say
Your terms are arrogant, your ambition swells
Large as a king’s.”

“ And well,” Columbus said,
“ For my success will be a king’s, my place
No lower than a sovereign’s. Who or makes
Or finds a kingdom must be lord therein.”
Then Ferdinand : “ You have, sir, ended all.
We were well-minded towards you, but you ask
More than beseems us to admit or grant.
The queen herself will answer for Castile
With her own royal lips.” De Talavera
Again spoke quickly : “ Madam, I entreat,
Listen no more. The Church herself has given
To Spain her rights beyond a certain line,
A certain longitude, not to be given away
Lightly to other powers. The Church alone
Can transfer make into an alien’s hands
Of even vice-regal rule. So far away,
Across those seas uncertain of return,
Such powers will be as absolute. O madam,
Unless it were Pope Gregory’s own desire—
And we may guess his mind—you may not use
Your royal privilege to cast away
That very privilege—believe me so.”

Then to Columbus slowly spoke the queen :

“ The Church is more than I. This cannot be

If you demand so much.” A moment then

Columbus stood, pale to the lips, then said :

“ Madam, farewell. For all your courtesies,

And all the kindnesses that you have done me

Out of your bounteous heart and your benignity,

I shall be ever grateful, nor forget

You nor your goodness ever.” Then he knelt

And kissed her robes, and rose : “ My queen, fare-

well,

King Ferdinand, farewell. To each beside

Who has thought kindly of me, who has been

Good to me as a friend—I bid farewell.”

He bowed his head in greeting to them all,

And left the presence with firm, resolute steps.

The queen rose up, and with her face hard set,

Signified all should leave her, nor speak more

Upon the matter to her ; all went out

Except the king, and he and she remained

Engaged in their state business many hours.

Then also went King Ferdinand ; and then

De Deza came, and boldly entered in,

Bringing St. Angel and the Marchioness,

And falling on his knees before the queen,

“ Madam,” he cried, “ even now Columbus goes,
Even now is setting forth upon his way
To France with all his plans. Hear us, O queen !
O Marchioness of Moya, speak to her !
She will forgive you all.” And as he rose
The lady knelt at Isabella’s feet :

“ Madam, my queen, forgive—what shall repair
Your loss in this great man if now he go ?
See his firm trust, his noble confidence
In his great voyage, the thought of many years !
No sudden flash of fancy, but conceived
First in his youth and slowly brought to shape
In years of patient musing and research,
And through a rough experience of life
And common things, as well as lofty thoughts
And profound learning in the natural world.
He is no cloistered dreamer, to lay out
Business and work for other men to do,
He carries out himself his own intent,
And in entire good faith he undertakes
The burden and the dangers of his schemes ;
Nor claims reward, should his adventure fail,
For toil and dangers borne, for his lost years.”
De Deza spoke again : “ Madam, behold
The great rejoicings through all Christendom

For your late consummated victories !
For driving out of heathen ! How much more
Will Christendom rejoice for bringing in
Of perishing souls, and victories obtained
In lands that Satan surely deems his own.”
He scarcely ceased before St. Angel spoke :
(King Ferdinand’s Receiver of Revenue)
“ My sovereign lady ! It is no small good
That now is slipping from you. To all time
Your realm will be enriched and your bright crown
More gloriously bright, if this man win
And you have kept the adventure in your hand,
And helping him have made it as your own.
See how the sway of Portugal extends,
And well we know that France and England yearn
For like increase of country and renown.
How small your risk in sending those few ships
To bear your sceptre to such distant bounds,
That on your realm the sun shall never set ;
Your sceptre and your rule of gentleness,
The effluence of your crown that radiates good
And is a benefaction to all lands
Whereon it gracious shines. Madam, indeed
This man is right, and you have sent him hence
With his free hand that kept the best for you,

And his warm heart that worthy service gave,
And offered such adornments for your crown
As were not brought to any queen before :
Shall he go forth from Spain ?” The queen rose
up,

And stretching out her hands said : “ Bring him
back,

Not one ounce have I in my treasury,
But I will pledge the jewels of the crown
For this great enterprise ; it is the Lord’s.
Go, bring Columbus back.” St. Angel then
Assured her of the necessary sums
As loans from Ferdinand. “ Go, quick,” she said,
“ Seek out Columbus, bring him here at once,
Let not his sore heart wait.” De Deza went
Joyful to seek him, but he went too late,
Columbus had been seen to mount in haste
And ride out on the road to Cordova.

“ Fetch me a courier,” the queen exclaimed,
“ To bring him back. Let someone mount and
ride

The swiftest horse I have.” Then De Ojeda,
A gallant youth, cried out, “ O gracious queen,
Make me your courier, for I love Columbus,
And I am famed for horsemanship.”

“ Then go
With your best swiftness. Take my signet ring,
And tell him I agree to all his terms,
I grant him absolutely all he asks.”

“ Madam, with joy. It now must be two hours
Since he set out, but I will bring him back
At twice the speed he went at.”

The young man
Dashed on his errand gaily ; he rode well
And two leagues out from Santa Fé beheld
Upon the bridge of Pinos, in the pass
Amidst the hills, Columbus, who rode on
And would not turn his head, though well he
guessed

Some hint it was or compromise, that made
Those horse's feet come ringing on the road
So fast behind him. De Ojeda spurred
Close to Columbus : “ Stay, I bring you word
Even from her majesty ; she bids you turn
To speak with her again.” Then did Columbus
Draw up his mule, and to the messenger :
“ I will not turn one step, it is too late
For further speech. Six years is long enough
For full investigations ; is enough
For patience and submission. I have done

With my attendance on De Talavera
Although he be Archbishop of Granada,
And more, the queen's confessor. I have laid
Before her feet such offers as come once
To pope or queen, or in the world at all,
And I have been kept waiting all these years
And now I am refused my just demands.
Go to, you mock me with your message."
He turned with settled face, and urged the mule
Again upon her way. "See," cried the youth,
An anxious haste upon his glowing brow,
"See the queen's signet ring. She bids me say
That she accepts your terms, she grants you
all."

"All?" said Columbus. "Do not mock me, sir,
You are young and eager, you have been misled."
"Upon my soul those are her very words,—
Besides, here is her ring." Columbus then,
Taking the ring looked at it earnestly,
And a faint light crept over his grave face ;
He put it in his bosom and looked round
On his companion, turned his mule again
To Santa Fé, and said : "She is alone
A safe, sure anchorage in yon wavering sea
Of priests and courtiers." To Ojeda then ;

“You have brought good news, young sir, some
day perhaps

You will go farther with me than this ride
Of two leagues in the Vega?” A quick smile
Lit the dark, handsome face of the young man :
“I wish no better luck, when you have reached
Your distant continents. At sail or oar
I am nothing, but when fighting is your need,
A fiery steed, a good Toledo blade,
Dangers of any kind in any land,
None readier to go with you, sir, than I.”

At Santa Fé in April of that year,
Was signed a solemn treaty by the sovereigns
With Christopher Columbus, granting all
That he in his ambition’s proudest thought
Had ever dreamed of ; and when May set in,
He made his parting charged with fullest powers
To take in Palos ships, and men, and stores—
And set forth for the coast. Now joy indeed
Rang in his step when to the convent gate
Upon the hills by Palos de Moguér
He came, and meeting there his little son,
Him with such hearty vigour did embrace
That the child shouted ; but not idle joy,
Incessant trouble, waited on his steps,

And only a strong heart might overcome.

Upon the morrow's morn, Pérez and he
Went down to Palos : At St. George's Church,
The old church overlooking the long street
Down to the river-side, they met the *alcaldé* ;
And before him and certain registrars,
And the chief townsfolk summoned there to hear,
The public notary, standing in the porch
Beside Columbus, Pérez, and Pinzón,
In a loud voice read out the royal mandate :—
That in a ten days' space three caravels
Should be appointed to the Admiral,
And with their full crews and their needful stores,
Should ride prepared beside the Bar of Saltés ;
And that sufficient men should be compelled
By force to join, if willing hands enough
Should not come forward.

Abject terror fell
On most hearts there ; the brave sea-faring folk
Ready and bold on their accustomed ways,
Trembled before an unknown, pathless sea,
Haunted by ghost and devil, serpents huge,
The ghostly Hand, storms of some unknown kind,
And lands, if lands there were there, populous
With every sort of hideous savage beast.

Columbus and the royal officer
Sent to assist him, toiling day by day,
Urged and persuaded vainly ; the Pinzóns,
Talking and promising had no better luck,
And only by the strong hand of the law,
And after weeks and weeks of ceaseless toil,
Were the three ships assembled and their crews.
Of these the largest ship was the St. Mary,
Decked over prow to stern, at her mast-head
Carrying the Admiral's flag ; the Pinta next
Commanded by Pinzón ; the Nina last
Small and felucca-rigged, Pinzón the younger
Being her captain ; and on these two ships
At prow and stern alone the cabins rose,
Poop and forecastle called. Of mariners
The three crews counted ninety ; pilots there were,
Sagacious and well-practised ; De Arana,
Cousin of Pedro, as chief alguazil ;
A leech, a notary, a surgeon ; the three captains ;
Servants, adventurers ; which made in all
One hundred and one score of living souls.

By August all was ready, and Columbus
Upon the second morning of the month
By Juan Pérez was confessed and shriven ;
Then with his officers and all his men,

Having like him a good confession made,
Went to St. George's church, and there received
From the priest's hands the consecrated bread ;
Thus to be reassured and win from heaven
A blessing on their solemn enterprise.
The day was passed in turmoil, men and boys,
Helped by their friends, continually escaped
And well-concealed were hardly caught again ;
And when at vesper-bell all went on board
Columbus sternly ordered off all boats
Of friends who came for last adieus and tears,
And without more ado put off at once
For Saltés, and there anchored till the dawn,
For the tide served at dawn. All through the
night

The troubled townsfolk watched upon the shore,
Weeping and praying, and from time to time
Some small boat followed softly to the ships
For secret farewells, or perchance to give
Means of escape to some of those on board.

It was a dark night, and a threatening wind
Rose, bringing heavy clouds. It wanted still
An hour to sunrise when the Admiral
Gave orders to weigh anchor ; then began
The creaking of the cables as they worked

Slow through the blocks and brought the anchors
home ;

The long oars swept the stream with steady strokes,
The caravels moved slowly down the Bar,
Columbus first. He standing on the poop
Watching, directing, chanced to turn his eyes
On the faint dawn behind the long low line
Of eastern mountains, and it brought to mind
How he stood musing at his father's door
That April night at Genoa, long ago,
Watching the dawn and sunrise, when there rose
The first faint prophecy of this very hour
Into his mind, that now was come to pass.
But now no nightingale's loud singing fired
His soul with courage ; all the sounds he heard
Were distant lamentation, hopeless grief,
Shouting and oaths of seamen ; waters, wind ;
Nor did the gathering of the morning light
Come round about him, but in darkness lay
His course towards the darkness ; in his heart
A silent grief at parting from his sons :
But the ships left the river, sails were spread
And tightened in the breeze ; the curving prows
Cut through the water, and the hissing foam
Flew up and danced upon the open sea ;

He felt the waves beneath him, and there shone
A kind of solemn peace upon his brow.

So went Columbus forth like one unknown
On his great enterprise, and when the sun
Rising in clouds cast dull light on the sea,
To those who watched, whose strained eyes saw the
ships
Afar off, ever lessening to the sight,
They seemed like obstinate and forsaken souls
Taking their own way to eternal death.

CANTO VIII.

HIS FIRST VOYAGE.

BENEATH grey clouds, across a heaving sea,
Did Christopher Columbus guide his ships
South-west and south, and towards the seven isles,
The sister islands of the Atlantic waves
By Africa : the Fortunate Islands named,
The Golden Isles, the Blessed, in days of old,
Now the Canary Islands.

Eager he,
His captains and his pilots, for the voyage,
Whether by common dangers or unknown
The way might be molested ; but the men
Bore the like gloomy hearts as those they left
Watching the sea by Palos. As they went
A great and stormy wind harassed their ships,
And the third day, the Pinta staggering wild
Answered no more her helm ; broken, unshipped
Her rudder hung. By Pinzón's ready craft

The mischief was repaired, and she made safe
Till she should reach her port ; but to the minds
Of the unwilling seamen this appeared
An evil omen, and the Admiral
Doubted not that by treachery and ill-will
Of the ship's owners had the thing been done,
Who, forced to yield the Pinta for the voyage,
Had trusted that when found disabled thus
Columbus would discard her and her crew,
And she return to Spain.

After some days,

In calmer weather, as the night closed in,
A heavy cloud which floated far ahead—
Low-lying, yet not resting on the sea,
Unchanged of shape through many long bright
hours—
Grew purple with a fearful lurid glow ;
And as they still advanced upon their way
Clearly they saw that upward shooting flames
Mixed with the cloudy column that upbore
That lurid canopy, and all appeared
As they drew nearer, to spring up in air
From a deep basin in some mountain-top
Opening from earth's deep centres. "See," they
cried,

“See where he leads us ! If those horrid flames
Find through the solid earth their way and rise
Thus in the face of heaven, who knows how soon
The waves may open, and a burning gulf
Take us down swiftly to the infernal fires ?
O Spain, O Spain ! the safety of thy seas !
Where natural tempests only, and the foam
Of tossing billows, come to fright our hearts
Instead of unknown horrors and the sight
Of opening Hell ! What saints can save us now ?
Cruel the king that drove us to this doom,
Cruel this mad adventurer and his schemes !”
Columbus, hearing something of their talk
And seeing the wide terror of their eyes,
Came to the bows, and kindly spoke and smiled ;
And told them this great mountain bore the name
Of Tenerife ; and hailed the other ships
To come alongside ; and then told them tales
Of Etna and Vesuvius, fiery hills
In Sicily and near Naples, oft beheld
By him upon his voyages—known by all
Abiding in those countries, and by all
Sailing upon those seas, to be the work
Of God Almighty, like all other hills ;
And how men feared not round their very feet

To build their towns, and how in Tenerife
Were human dwellings, as himself had seen.
Thus for a time the men were reassured ;
But when they passed the island, when they heard
Its terrible thunderings, and on nearer view
Those shooting flames seemed fiercer, and the
clouds

Of smoke and vapour fell around in showers
Of dust and water and small heated stones—
They cowered in fear, nor held themselves as safe
Until they reached Gomera's circling bay.

Here they took stores—water, and wood, and
sheep—

As in the old days in the island home
Columbus had foreseen. Three weeks' delay
They suffered here, in part to seek a ship
To take the Pinta's place, then, that search vain,
To make her fit for sea ; the Nina's rig
To alter from her lateen sails to square
That she might work the handier ; and in part
Because of absolute unchanging calms.
Sore-vexed the Admiral was by this delay—,
For he had news of ships from Portugal
Lying in wait off Herro for his fleet ;
But all at last was ready, and their oars

Slow took them from Gomera's sheltering port.
Due west they steered, and when her rocks and
woods

Sank out of sight, and fitful airs arose
That hourly freshening filled their idle sails
Full from the east, till on a steady breeze
They sailed past Herro, and her southern cliffs
Faded and were no more ; and not a line
Of coast or highest mountain-top was seen
All round the clear horizon ; nor appeared
One sign of the strange vessels—Christopher
Felt that his hand was firm upon his work,
His real voyage begun, and his heart braced
And steady as his ship before the breeze.
Not so the men ; the horizon clear and bare,
The deep blue waters which they were the first
To cleave in form, seemed but a dreary way
To chaos or some never heard of death ;
Strange all around them, and their errand strange,
Their hearts gave way in bitterness and tears.
“ Where do we go ? ” they said. “ How can we tell
That yonder circled line before our eyes
Is not the very edge of the flat earth ?
What knowledge has he that we can return
Ever again, if once we come in sight

Of that dread gulf of dark and nothingness,
And near the powers that sure are waiting there
To drag us over? Or what dreadful beasts,
Leviathans, or behemoths, or worse
Satanic serpents, lie in wait for us?"
Columbus sought to cheer them, promised shares
To all in his good fortunes; and his speech
Cheerful and strong, his bold, clear countenance,
The brave, kind voice that talked their fears away,
Prevailed again their confidence to win
And rouse the natural courage of their hearts.

Across the trackless deep their course was made
For full two weeks in sunshine, veiled at times
By soft, thin clouds and gently falling showers;
Small wingéd fishes azure-shining played
And sprang about the ships, a hern flew over,
A golden finch alighted on the mast;
And all the mariners fancied land was near.
But other signs they held as ominous;
A spar from some wrecked vessel floating by,
A meteor flashing through the heights of heaven,
Leaving long trails in the transparent air,
The lesser falling stars which now seemed strange,
The changing of the compass—no more fixed
To the north pole but turning oft aside,

And their increasing speed. The trade-winds
blew

Strong from the east, nor failed by day or night
Unresting, steady, and the little fleet
Outsped the Admiral's hopes ; but this he hid,
And kept a record for the common view
Which did not show how vast the space which soon
Lay between them and Spain, whilst for himself
He had a faithful reckoning, and rejoiced
To note the lengthening way. The steady wind
With such a sweet persistence urged the ships
In course so straight that during many days
No sail was changed, no rudder moved a point ;
Fragrance of many flowers came floating round,
The long calm sunshine and the cloudless skies
Were tempered by a soft and balmy air,
Nor heat extreme nor any cold they knew,
But went like blessed souls to Avalon.

Great beds of leaves and tangled weeds came by,
Some pale and withered, as fresh-gathered some,
Some from the sea-rocks torn, others from banks
By rivers of fresh water ; a strange bird
On silver pinions played about the masts
Or flew before them like a messenger
Inviting them to some angelic place.

“Soon” said the men, “soon shall we sight the
land,

Soon this good wind shall bear us to the shores
Whence all these tokens come, and then how
strange

Our former tears, our needless fears will seem !”

But when again another week had passed
A shortening sail to wait the other ships,
Pinzón described the numerous flocks of birds
Passing from northwards, and the mists and clouds
In the north offing, which he held for signs
That land not distant lay upon that side—
And still Columbus, doubting not that land
Islands most likely lay to right and left,
But not the mainland he was making for,
Refused to steer one half-point from his course,
And past the light rains, and the hovering birds,
And the soft feathery vapours, held straight on—
The disappointed, frightened seamen passed
Into a passion of distress and fear ;
All round them sea, and nothing but the sea,
Day after day to search the horizon round
And only water meet their straining eyes,
Night after night to seek their narrow beds
Nor ever waken to the cry of “ Land !”

And every morning still the circling sea
For all their landscape. Cramped within the ships
Their aching limbs were weary for the shore,
Their spirits not the less for freedom pined,
And often when the Admiral left the poop,
Leaning upon the taffrail they would watch
With gloomy eyes the fast receding line
Of twisting foam that melted from their sight
Upon the blue waves homewards, and would say :
“ How can we ever sail again to Spain
Against this obstinate wind ? What western
breeze

Can take us back across this wilderness ?
Never, oh, never more shall we behold
Our huts beside the Tinto ! Never our wives
Or little children kiss us any more !
And what to us will be those boasted lands
If ever we behold them ? Better far
We love our rough life and our simple homes,
Our plain fare, olives, chestnuts, and coarse bread,
Than these magnificent palaces of gold,
The wonderful flowers and fruits of which we
hear,
But which no man of woman born has seen ! ”
The very splendour of the cloudless sky

The gorgeous fires of sunset and of dawn,
Became a terror to them, a mere show
As all things round, delusive. Cheering words
Columbus spoke to them, and hearty jest,
But well he knew that always haunting fear
Hung round his ships, and superstitious dread,
To make unwilling workers when the stress
Of toil and hardship called for ready hearts ;
He knew that all—his voyage, his very life,
Hung on his power to please them and to rule,
Even as his security from shipwreck
Hung on the stoutness of a fir-tree plank,
A rudder-line, or cable.

At such times
Would De Arana urge the men to dance
And cheer themselves with music ; and they loved
To make two mariners from North Portugal
Sing, after the manner of their country, songs
Made on the instant, to some old-world air,
To their guitars alternate, answering thus :

1st Mar. Say if thou knowest the wine that they
grow in the vineyards of Minho,
Vineyards of trellis and tree, where
ripen the large purple clusters ?

2d Mar. Rich and strong of the grape-juice, and
lively the vintage of Minho,
Glad is the heart of the man that drinks
of its generous purple !

1st Mar. As a friend warm and courageous, the
wine that they press by the Minho,
Such the good fellows that drink it,
what wilt thou say of the maidens ?

2d Mar. Large and soft their dark eyes beneath
the black hats and silk plumage,
Loving the bosoms that beat beneath the
heavy gold necklets.

1st Mar. Ah for the maids and the dancing, the
terraced fields on the hill-side !
The ox-ploughs, the reaping of wheat,
the labours and sports of my boyhood !

2d Mar. Ah for the netting of fishes, alike on the
sea and the river !
Ah for my home on the meadows be-
tween the rough sea and the river !

1st Mar. Thus we both long in our singing with
tears and with sighs for our country ;
When will the weary days end, the
weary sight of this ocean ?

2d Mar. Thus we both long in our singing, our
spirits are weighed down with sorrow,
Ever more dreary and sad, our days on
this desolate ocean !

But songs like this drew forth the ready tears
Of the down-hearted listeners, and Arana
Would bid them tell some legend he had heard
Along their coast, and one of them would say,
“ I will, senhor, I can recite it bravely.”
Sitting astride then, on the lower end
Of the strong bowsprit, would begin it thus :

Hearken to this sweet tale of old—
To make you smile, to make you weep—
How once the fountains of the deep
Were opened, and the oceans rose
Above the high Caucasian snows,
And from the opening heavens the rain
Poured ceaseless on the levelled main,

Where through thick vapours soft and dark
Floated for weeks Noah's mighty ark.

The great rains ceased ; the falling tides
Sank slowly on the mountain sides,
Leaving all bare the rocky crown
Where the great Ark had settled down.
Whilst still the brown and frothing floods
Made islands of the hills and woods ;
Piled deep the pasture-lands with stones,
And strewed them with the mingled bones
Of men and beasts—did Noah come forth
To gaze upon the ruined earth,
And find upon her altered face
No sign of his old dwelling-place.
He bade his sons go forth in quest
Of some new home where he might rest,
And first to travel towards the West.
They went by mountain and by plain,
Through Greece and Italy and Spain,
And found no home, then forth again
Through Portugal they journeyed on,
And reached the coast when day was done.
Silent they stood in ecstasy—
Before them lay the crimson sea,

The crimson sea, the flaming West,
In all its perfect glory dressed.
They said : “ ’T is here our sire may rest.”
Thither they brought him, and he said,
And reverent bowed his hoary head :
“ The Lord’s full glory is confessed,
And all their undertakings blessed
To those who seek him by the West.”

Thus the men’s thoughts were turned from their
despair,
And for a little cheered.

At last the wind

Slackened a little, fluttered, veered, and fell,
Then in the west rose, soft and fragrance-laden
As if from fields and gardens. A great whale,
Floating upon the calm and sunny sea,
Sent up its double fountain ; on all sides
Shoals of such weed as shallow waters bear
In brown and yellow tangles, closed them in ;
Yet the deep-sea lead frequent cast, still sank
Some hundred fathoms and no bottom found.
The west wind dropped ; a leaden stillness came
Upon the sea, affrighting more the crews
Than any other danger, and one said

That they would lie for ever in these weeds
That stretched, it seemed, for miles on every side,
For he remembered legends of an isle
Foundered of old, and drawing surely down,
By its marine trees and strange climbing plants,
The unwary ships that crossed its sunken snares.
Such light, quick airs as sprang up in the west
From time to time, too light and transient were
To clear them from the weeds, or take them back
Those many, many hundred leagues; to them as
dread

Those delicate zephyrs as the roughest gales.
But whilst they feared and murmured, the sea rose
Heaved by some force unknown, in long slow swell
Sending the tangled seaweeds far apart;
The ships with new life rode upon the wave
And as by miracle floated clear again.
But this release cheered not the hearts morose
Resolved to fear and to distrust their chief—
A desperado, light of head, distraught—
And who could blame them if they took the rule
Into their own hands for their own lives' sake,
And turning homewards made their way to Spain
Before the stores ran out? Nor need they fear
His vengeance on their landing, they could trust

The waves to hide, if they should cast him out,
A second Jonah ; they could well contrive
That it should seem a natural accident,
A sudden squall, a broken spar that fell.
Columbus saw their thoughts, as oft before,
Knew that his life was trembling in their hands,
But ever kept his hopeful, calm aspect
And the clear courage of his kindling eyes.
The two Pinzóns, nor treacherous nor mean,
Yet went not with him truly from their hearts,
Resisted him in judgment, sought to take
High-handed their own way ; De Escobedo,
Gutierrez, and the other officers,
Jealous and haughty were but foes concealed,
And but for De Arana's constant help—
An honourable man, a hearty friend—
He stood almost alone.

So the time passed

Until Columbus, on a certain day
Studying the observations made at noon,
Judged they were in the waters where must lie
Cipango, the great island. Then Pinzón,
Having a needed chart with him, was signalled,
Came alongside, and swung it by a cord
Back to the Admiral, and even then

Whilst he and his best pilots bent their heads
Over the unrolled parchment as it lay
Spread on his knees, and earnestly surveyed
With pointed finger all the numbered lines,
And tracings of the islands—Pinzón's voice
Loud rang out from his poop: "Land! senhor,
land!

Mine the reward, I plainly see the land!"
That narrow shade upon the farthest light
Of the south-west horizon, sure was land!
The Admiral knelt, Pinzón with cheerful voice
Recited loud the Gloria in Excelsis,
All joined him in thanksgiving, and the crews
Swarmed up the masts, and on the rigging hung,
Each shouting that he plainly saw the land;
And with such vehement entreaties prayed
To change their course, and seek those blessed
shores,

The Admiral yielded to them, and all night
They sailed south-west. But when the morning
broke,

Bare was the whole horizon, not a sign
Of smallest island glittered in the light,—
All around was sea and nothing but the sea.
Sadly the fleet resumed its due-west course.

Yet pleasant times beguiled them : in the smooth
And sapphire water did the sailors bathe,
And swimming round to stretch their stiffened
limbs,

Found rivals in the dolphins, tumbling past,
After their wont delighting in the sun
And in the tranquil weather ; and again
The little wingéd fishes flashed o'erhead
And lighted on the decks ; small land-birds came,
From time to time, and rested on the ships
And sang as in a grove ; an albatross
Sailed over on broad wings, and the small fishes
That haunt the seashore rocks played round the
stern ;

Grasses came by ; but then again, for days
No birds were seen, no pleasant signs of land.

The first days of October being come,
A month had passed since Herro's lessening cliffs
Had gone down out of sight ; the distance sailed
Was nearly, as Columbus counted it,
Seven hundred and fifty leagues, which in his
mind

Should bring them to Cipango. Daily now
The mariners, excited by the scene
And by their ever-varying hopes and fears,

Continual shouted "Land!" and ever wrong
Grew daily more rebellious. On the sixth
Pinzón himself lost confidence, and desired
To stand to southward, but Columbus still
Changed not his mind at all, and bade his ships
Keep well together, most at morn and eve
When the light-lying level gives to view
Most clearly all the distance. On the seventh,
At sunrise, from his own mast-head was seen
A film so like to land that he sent on
The Nina, a fast sailer, to explore ;
And soon her hoisted flag and echoing gun
Announced the joyful certainty to all.
Proud and rejoicing went the little fleet,
Ringing with song and laughter all the day,
But when the sun went down, in his last light
Bare, clear, and bare, the whole horizon lay,
No level land, no mountain-top was seen.

All through the night the Admiral deeply
mused ;

The tokens truly pointed from the course
He had till now maintained ; the two Pinzóns
For change of course were urgent, and the crews
So long and hardly tried would take fresh heart,
Whilst, if a few days' sailing found him wrong

But little time was lost, he could return
To his original plan. He stood south-west,
And for three days they went with clearest skies
And favourable winds, and all the signs—
The shore-side fishes playing round the ships,
The little land-birds of no distant flight
That came at morning, and upon the masts
Sang all the day, winging their way at night
To the south-west as if their home lay there,
And came again at morning, summer ducks
Seen once or twice, rose-tinted pelicans,
The richer scents, the grasses on the wave
Fresher and greener—were more frequent seen.
But the disordered crews so long beguiled,
So frequently mistaken in their hopes,
Murmured and cursed with every league they made,
And darkly scowling, round the Admiral came,
Saying, “ We go no farther, we no more
Believe these signs your arts have conjured up ;
They are but devilish flatteries, and will soon
Betray us to some strange and horrible death
And the perdition of our sinful souls.
See the sun sinking for this seventieth time
Since we left Palos on that stormy night
Of evil omen, driving us all day,

At night it drags us onward as it sets ;
We will go home whilst yet our souls are ours ;
Take us back whence you brought us ; we refuse
At your command to sail another league ;
Against our wills we came this hated voyage ;
Turn the ships' heads, for we are desperate men."
The Admiral looked straight in each man's eyes,
The last red rays upon his resolute face :
" Men, I am not your servant, nor am I
As my own master. I am here to serve
My sovereign princes, they command this voyage,
Pledged am I to pursue it, and I will.
I thought you were brave men, and must I find
That when you come to the proof you are but
cowards ?
Do you forget that all revolt from me
Is treason to your sovereigns, and a crime
That cannot be forgiven ? Are you not brave ?
Yet will you now desert me, who am bound
To finish out my task ? who have no thought
But that God helps us all ? Get you to bed,
Commend yourselves to God, and you shall have
Forgiveness, both from Him and from your king."
For this time they were awed, and sought their
beds

Submissive, but arose with gloomy brows,
And anger working darkly in their hearts.

At morning with a freshening breeze they flew
Swift through the rushing water and the spray,
And swifter yet, and gloomy eyes beheld
Large sprays of flowers float dazzling past the ships ;
Great uncouth fruits fresh broken from the bough,
Or green or scarlet, smooth or prickly skinned,
Glow in the foam, and undulating passed
A long blue feather in the curving wave ;
A butterfly that rested on a stalk
Closed and unclosed its large and purpled wings ;
And then a reed, a plank, a carven staff
Were dripping brought on board : the sunny skies
Were not more bright than hope on every face.
At sunset when the vesper-hymn was sung
On the St. Mary, to the excited crew
The Admiral spoke : " Give thanks to God," he
said,

" That he has brought us safe seven hundred leagues
Across these unknown waters ; from Gomera
In sunshine and fair weather we have come,
And now your fears have melted into hope
And a full confidence. Remember now
My former orders given, that when our ships

Had made two thousand miles, we must not stir
After the night has fallen ; these good signs
Call us to caution, and your rising joy
Must teach you also patience ; so to-night
We will take in our sails, nor make more way
Than is forced on us by the slackening wind,
No doubt ere morning we shall sight the land.”
He went up on the poop, the mariners
Thronged the forecastle, and their jests and songs
And frequent shouts, from one or other ship
Slow heaving up and down upon the swell,
Made the long night hours noisy.

Silent, still,

As earth before the sunrise, stood and watched
Columbus. Slow the hours passed by ; a gleam
Drew his quick eyes ; he doubted if he saw,
And to Gutierrez, speaking soft and low,
Bade him come up and look ; Gutierrez came,
And to him also was the little gleam
Clearly a human light ; but fearing still,
Because of his strong wish, the Admiral
Called the chief pilot Sancho to come up,
And then no light was visible. Long they watched,
Till their eyes ached and dazzled ; then again
They saw it come and go, as borne by one

Moving on shore, or swaying in a boat
Upon the water ; but none thought the gleam
Was a light really borne by human hands
Except Columbus only, and he knew
The time was come, and with calm confidence,
Resting upon his arm, looking straight on
Beneath the starry glory of the night,
He waited what he knew the dawn would bring.
At two, the Pinta's signal gun was fired,
And loud the cry was heard, " Land ! senhor, land ! "
Not far ahead there lay a level shape,
Darker than any cloud, of outline clear
And never-changing—it was land indeed.
No clouds were in the heavens, no film or mist
Was on the whole horizon, only there
The low unchanging line upon the sea,
Not more than two leagues distant. As they lay
Cautious, soft-drifting on the quiet waves,
Columbus let his dreaming thoughts flow on
In solemn joy beyond the power of speech,
And wondering expectation almost pain.
" At last," he said, " at last my cup is full ;
My twenty years of service are repaid."

Towards dawn he stood alert and bade prepare
To land at sunrise. He and the Pinzóns

Had their boats manned, and every man well armed,
And each boat bore a standard richly worked—
On one side a green cross, on the reverse
The letters of the sovereigns' names : " F. Y.,"
And over each its proper crown in gold.
When the swift glow of dawn swept up the sky,
They saw the land in many level leagues
Of feathering palms, green sward, and bordering
 sands,

But nowhere any city, nor a sign
Of church or village or of peasant's cot.
Columbus gave the word, the anchors dropped,
And richly clad in scarlet he went down
Into his boat, holding in his left hand
The royal standard ; like the Pinzóns
In goodly vesture, bearing each his flag.

Slowly rowing through the pure and scented air,
Above the crystal waters in whose depths
Each painted shell and branching coral shone
Clear as on land, they saw as they drew near,
Bare, tawny men standing upon the beach,
Or running from the woods in deep amaze
To gaze upon the wonderful huge shapes
Lying between them and the rising sun,
Seeming some terrible wild beasts of the sea ;

But when the boats of unaccustomed form,
Carrying magnificent beings, bearded, strange,
Came closer to the shore, these innocent men,
Affrighted, ran back to their woods again.
Then on the white sands grated every keel,
And first stepped out, majestic and grave,
The Admiral, who straight knelt down and kissed
The earth with reverence, saying in himself :
“ My God, my God, thou grantest my long prayer,
This is the consummation of my life,
I thank thee with the whole strength of my heart.”
Then he raised up his glowing face, where tears
Of joy ran over, and in solemn voice,
All having knelt like him, and like him kissed
The new-found old-world soil : “ Let us give
 thanks,
Let us the glory give to God our Lord,
Who brought us through the perils of the sea,
To take these shores for ever in the names
Of our great sovereigns.” And he arose and stood
And drew his sword, and set up the three flags,
And in the midst of his small company
Fulfilled all legal forms, received their oaths,
And took possession of the new-found land
For the two crowns of Arragon and Castile.

Then burst loud transports forth, with shouts and
tears

The seamen ran and stamped upon the sands,
Rejoiced to feel their feet on earth again ;
Or crowded eager round the Admiral,
Kissing his hands, embracing him with thanks,
Forgetting now their former mutiny,
Their sullen opposition, in one breath
Praying for pardon and for great rewards.

Meanwhile, the innocent natives taking heart
Drew slowly near, with many pauses made
To kneel and lay their heads and arms in dust,
Adoring these, so godlike and unknown,
Who had come down in wondrous broad-winged
cars

Moving at their command, and who appeared
To this dark ignorant people even to be
Some creatures from the sun, offspring of gods.
Then growing bolder still, they gathered round
Gazing, and touching each man and his clothes ;
Worshipping most the tall and stately man
Whose evident greater strength and gracious mien
Assured them he was chief. With like surprise
The Spaniards gazed on them : their slender forms
Painted and streaked with many a gaudy hue,

Their long black hair cut straight across their
brows,

Their soft black eyes, their mild and gentle ways,

As children trustful, kind ; for all defence

Light slender spears of cane they had, bone-tipped

Or hardened in the fire. Some simple gifts

The Admiral shared amongst them ; beads and
toys,

And tinkling hawk's-bells, whose unwonted sound

Enchanted them like music ; everything

Brought by these wonderful strangers had a charm

Mysterious, as of heaven. With grateful hands

They brought their best in answer, cotton thread

Wound in great balls, parrots and yucca-bread ;

And from the woods their wives and children came

To gaze upon the strangers. Gold they had

In thin small plates, and sought by many signs

To make the Admiral know that it was brought

From a great western country, where the king

In golden vessels decked with gems was served.

Of hollowed trunks of trees their boats were made

In which they lightly tossed upon the waves

Easy and safe as birds ; their huts were built

Of palm-tree logs, and roofed in with the leaves

Seemed like a natural growth upon the soil.

All day the weary voyagers reposed,
In rest that seemed a new-created joy,
Sufficient, inexhaustible ; at night
On board returning, even Columbus slept
Through quiet hours such deep refreshing sleep
As since he sailed from Spain he had not known.

Two days they passed in rest, then sailed away
To search the island round, which they had named
San Salvador ; and taking then on board
Some of the willing natives, both to serve
As pilots well-acquainted with those seas,
And as interpreters ; for days they passed
Along the crystal deep from isle to isle
Each lovelier than the other. Spreading trees,
Clear lakes, and sparkling rivulets they found ;
Amidst the palm-woods and the hanging flowers
Large bright-hued parrots flashed across the sun,
Screeching their noisy joy ; the softer notes
Of countless smaller birds filled all the glades,
And some, mere sparks of jewelled feathers, hung
Murmuring above the flowers, or softly passed,
Lovely and swift as light ; the air was full
Of varying perfumes, spices, blossoms, leaves ;
A starlit softness were the balmy nights,
Filled with the noise of insects, and the flash

Of four-flamed fire-flies. The white-sanded shores
In coral terraces went sudden down
Into deep waters, or in stretching reefs
Made natural harbours, where in liquid calm
Rocks and white sands and shells of varied hue,
Polished, fantastic, branching coral woods,
Large seaweeds feathering out their crimson sprays,
Or floating golden streamers shone and gleamed
Plain in the daylight stillness ; and where flashed
Fishes of shining sides and rainbow hues.
All was like fairy-land, and over all
And filling all, was soft translucent air
And cloudless blue. These isles Columbus deemed
The very islands lying near Cathay,
By Marco Polo seen, and farther south
The lands reported by these natives, rich
And gold-producing, could none other be
Than Mangi or Cipango or Cathay ;
In counsel with his comrades where to sail,
Those golden lands imperious drew his choice.

Amongst the countless islands scattered wide
Over the bright seas and transparent depths,
Careful he led his ships, amongst the reefs,
The shoaling sands, the frequent currents' force ;
From time to time pausing to go on shore

One or another of these fairy realms ;
Joyful they went by day, and slept each night
Expectant of fresh wonders when they rose.
Thus ere October closed, before them stood
Magnificent mountains ranging high and wide,
And wide and lofty forests ; a vast island
Known by the name of Cuba. Landing first
Beside a river-mouth—San Salvador,
The sea-worn ships were drawn up on the beach
To be repaired and thoroughly careened,
And in the pause of necessary work,
Both officers and seamen would go forth
Exploring on the river and the plains,
Amidst those newer scenes ; for in this land
Of larger beauty, all the glowing air
Was yet more warm and balmy, tree and flower
More stately, sweet, and gracious, and the skies
Seemed to swell higher, and their radiant hues
To be more clear and radiant.

Thus one day

The Admiral, De Arana, young Pinzón,
And all the men not needed at the ships,
Taking a boat, rowed gently up the stream
Between the bamboo thickets on each bank,
Rising some two score feet, their pliant canes

Crossing and intercrossed, impenetrable,
Shaded the river ; farther on, amidst
An open space, a single plant arose
In long innumerable stems, arch above arch
Of swaying plumes that bowed their gentle weight
Into a soft and purplish tinted dome,
And made all round a kind of green arcade
Of clear and rustling twilight. Far across
That level sweep, where sedge and arum grew
Around a quiet pool, some red gleams caught
Their curious eyes, and forthwith young Pinzón
And most part of the crew, leaving the boat,
Set out to find the cause ; beneath the shade
Of the banana's long and arching leaves
There stood in still repose small scarlet cranes
Reflected in the water ; these they named
For their bright hue, flamingoes. Pushing on
They came to a dry ground beneath broad oaks
And clumps of pine-trees, over whose proud tops
Towered the golden trunks of royal palms,
And the smooth grey palmistas column-like,
Catching a fuller light which drew their eyes
Higher and higher to the arching roofs
Where sunshine made transparent all the leaves
With green and amber ; where upon the boughs

Burdens of other foliage hung, and threw
Their flowery trails across from tree to tree,
Of white bells wax-like, gold or scarlet stars,
Crimson or azure cups, and wreathed the trunks
With like luxuriance of like mingled hues
Gorgeous or delicate, and made the place
A very palace of beauty, all the air
Filled as with heavy incense. Here and there
Flitted the butterflies like wandering flowers,
And birds flashed past, or settled overhead
To pour out ravishing songs. All was so vast,
So wonderful, so beautiful, that they who gazed,
The roughest man amongst them, stood there fixed.
Breathless as under some cathedral nave.
After a while, searching with curious eyes,
They saw upon the ground the fallen fruits
Creamy and sweet, and smiling ate their fill,
And called those fruits ambrosia, food for gods.
Sitting on tree-trunks green with feathery ferns,
Bright with fantastic orchids' various hues,
They lingered long in indolent delight,
Then gathered up of those abundant stores
As much as they could carry to the boat,
That with their fragrant spoils they might rejoice
Their waiting comrades, and return again

To take away fresh burdens.

Many a time

Columbus, gazing at the mountain sides,
 Had longed with a great longing to go up
 And look upon the country from those heights ;
 Now, waiting in the boat amid the stir
 Of the quick-gliding water and the canes
 Swaying above his head, and numerous sounds
 In the mysterious forest on each hand—
 He could resist no longer, and set out
 Alone across the level breadth of green,
 And struck into the woods. Through the lianas
 Hanging down snake-like, slung from tree to tree,
 Through many-prickled cacti, round or tall,
 Through thorny roseaux palms, through slender
 canes

Clinging with crooked claws at every joint
 To bush and tree, he made himself a way
 With his good sword, and to the very feet
 Of the first mountain cliffs. From rock to rock
 Eager he climbed, until above the trees
 He reached a height whence he could see around
 From the high mountains rising up behind,
 Across the forest's fluctuating sea
 To the blue ocean, still the shore unseen.

There, standing on a granite rock, he gazed
Into the solemn region of the woods ;
From palm to pine-top, oak, and sycamore
His eye went on for miles, all solemn, still,
As if in expectation, as remote
From step or touch of man as mountain heights
Wrapped in perpetual snow, or the small clouds
That in the blue transparent heights of heaven
Lie white and delicate. Here long he gazed,
Up to those mountains where no human foot
Had ever trod, and saw them stretch for leagues
On either hand against the melting sky,
And towards the horizon to behold the sea
Whence he had come from Spain ; then to the west
Where stretching on, the immeasurable space
Of this great continent lay. His heart was full
And overflowed in speech : “ O lovely land !
After how long and many years I see
These scenes that were my youth's, my life's
 desire !

After how long, after how many years !
How I rejoice now that I did not yield,
But pressed my strong wish through all obstacles,
And never failed to strengthen and renew
My patient, passionate efforts, that have brought

Success in fullest measure ; and I rest.
Yet here are not the temples and vast towns,
The gorgeous grandeur of huge palaces,
Such as I thought to find, nor world-worn kings.
O land, and lovely islands, and fair seas !
Following the setting sun we find you here
Bathed in a fresh, untouched, a hushed delight
As of perpetual morning ; all things here
Are dewy with the fragrance of the dawn,
And Eden's glory. Old land ! thou art new,
As when one looking on his first-born babe,
Filled with a rapture of a new delight
Beholds him as the first of all the race ;
The world's long history forgotten quite,
The hundred generations slipped away
Out of his mind, uncounted. Innocent
Thy gentle superstitions as the blank
Of soulless infancy, which hath no creed
Nor worship ; but ere long, O world, to thee
Shall come the truth that wakens up the soul,
Saves, and makes free. Ere no long time thy
sons
Shall throng to matins and to even-song,
Called by the melody of chiming bells ;
Vigil and feast shall learn, and all things good.

Cities shall rise upon thy river-sides,
And teach thee industries and arts ; thy soil
Shall bring forth double when good husbandry
Informs thy people through the white men's care.
Then will my noble queen be proud and glad
That to the poor Italian she gave heed,
And saw his soul, and knew him as elect
To take this great adventure to its end.
Hither my sons shall come—as rulers here
Christian and noble ; and I ere I die,
Taking of thy rich stores shall gain my end,
The Holy Land be rescued and made great
And safely guarded till the end of time.
Beloved old world ! not vain the augury
Which brought the Holy Rood across the deep
In swift and cloudless voyage, and no life lost ;
I, Christopher, have borne the Lord Christ here,
Even as he bade me on the stormy night
When by the wave-beat rocks I made my vow.”

CANTO IX.

DISCOVERY OF HAYTI—RETURN TO SPAIN—RECEPTION AT BARCELONA.

WESTWARD again Columbus led his ships,
Past headland after headland, river and bay,
And still no ending, and conjecture grew
That here indeed was Asia, and the dreams
Which had upheld him all those weary years
No dreams but simple truth ; yet when convinced
That also this was but a sea-girt land
And Asia yet to seek, he held it clear
It was surrounded by the Indian seas ;
Yet later did his fancy turn again
To his first thought—and in that thought he died.

Along these shores they found the native folk
As elsewhere, trustful, kind, but better skilled
Of eye and hand, their houses better built,
Larger and well adorned. They led their lives

In household ways more ordered ; in their homes
Idols of wood they had, and made by signs
Profession of religion. Here Columbus
Learned from the natives that the vast domains
Of Prester John, for so he apprehended
Their speech and signs, at no great distance lay
Beyond the distant mountains ; and sent forth
Some of his people to make search three days
For the great Khan, the convert world-renowned.
These, from their fruitless errand when returned,
Told how their way had lain through fertile lands
Of spices, fruits, rare gums, and precious ores,
Awaiting but the white man's master touch
To change to boundless wealth—and on all sides
The fame came to them of an island rich
Beyond all islands in great caves of gold
Pure, inexhaustible, Babequé called
In the strange Indian tongue. Eastward it lay,
But eastward when the Admiral turned his ships
Rough billows and head winds assailed his fleet,
The first rude contradiction of the sea
That he had yet encountered since he left
The Old World in September. Day by day
They stretched out far to seaward, driven at night
To seek safe anchorage along the shore,

Signalling duly the two caravels
To turn back likewise ; and one morning thus,
The Pinta, which had worked much farther east,
Was nowhere to be seen. Martin Pinzón,
A proud, bold man, resented in his heart
That an Italian should rule over him,
A Spaniard, well-renowned amongst his kin,
Who was the chief man in his native town
And down the coast ; and having heard much talk
Among the Indians from San Salvador,
Of gold-veined rocks and golden-sanded streams
In some great land to which they knew the way
Saw in these storms, and in his well-built ship,
A good fast sailer even against the wind,
Large opportunity : he made all sail,
And boldly tacking, was by break of day
Far beyond reach of keenest searching eyes.
Deeply Columbus was disquieted,
For knowing well Pinzón's high-tempered pride,
His nautical skill and aptness for command,
And how unwillingly he had been forced
To yield obedience to him—much he feared
Some treacherous attempt upon his part
At separate search, or to report in Spain
The news of these discoveries as his own ;

But useless to pursue, unknown his course,
And the St. Mary of much larger burden
And slower on the sea.

Along the coast
Sailing at times, going on shore at times,
December days began, genial and mild,
And on the fifth they rounded the steep cliffs
High and palm-crested, by Columbus called
Alpha and Omega ; for the first they were
Sailing to westward, and the last when now
Passed on an eastward course with all the deep
Lonely and bare before them. Cruising still
In wishful vagueness, borne this way and that
By pleasant breezes, till the Cuban cliffs
Had set behind them, their delighted eyes
Eastward beheld a range of mountain-tops
Shining above the sea-line, and elate
With fresh discovery they sailed away
Towards this new island, slowly rising large
And beautiful into view. But at the sight
Of those hill-tops their trembling Indians prayed,
With staring eyes and gestures of despair,
Not to advance, for the inhabitants
Were Caribees and man-eaters ; but in vain
They prayed and warned ; Columbus held his course,

And steered straight for the island. Peak on peak
Uprising tall, like carven pinnacles,
Smooth verdant mountains swelling from the woods,
Rivers, cascades, and frequent gardens fair—
Such Hayti was, a green delightful land
Where the warm teeming earth and gracious skies,
Brought all things to their fruit with little sweat
Of human labour ; and such joyous life
Bred in the mariners' hearts, that they exclaimed :
“ This is our Spain ! our Andalusian land
Enlarged, enchanted. Hearken, even the voice
Of our own nightingales ! Give it a name
O Admiral, in remembrance of our Spain.”
So was that island by Columbus called
Hispaniola, and he loved it well.

Here also were the Indians faithful, kind,
And gave these wonderful strangers of their stores,
Worshipped them, made them welcome, thought no
thing

Too good to do for them, brothers and gods.
Long afterwards they met the fearful tribes
Of the Carribæan Isles. Here frequently
Came the inferior chiefs in litters borne,
To see the ships ; unclothed but golden-crowned,
Prince-like in simple hospitalities.

Their great chief was Guacana, and he proved
A true and fast friend to the Admiral,
Loving him as a brother, and by him,
Through seeming treachery and much ill-report
In after days, trusted in as a brother.
Now on first hearing of these wonderful ships
And their white lords, he sent out his state-barge
Filled with his people, bringing gifts of gold,
And praying these celestial voyagers
To visit him at Guarico where he dwelt.

Thus it fell out, that late on Christmas Eve,
Cruising to eastward, seeking for the mouth
Of the great river where Guacana dwelt,
The Admiral's ship St. Mary struck the reefs
Through his men's carelessness. The rolling surf
Beat on his vessel broadside till she shook
From stem to stern, her every timber strained,
And in the sand she lay immovable.
Columbus went for refuge, with his crew,
On board the Nina, and at break of day
Guacana came with large and small canoes
And many men, and by their vigorous aid
The ship which hourly sundered in the swell
Was soon unloaded, and her many stores
Brought to the shore in safety, where they lay

Untouched by any native. The good chief
Gave them all shelter, and he set apart
A large house in his village for Columbus,
To be his own so long as he would stay
To see the island and repose himself.
Hence it arose, that lacking room for all
Of the two crews on board the caravel,
And they beseeching earnestly to remain
In that sweet land, the Admiral perceived
In these events a sign direct from Heaven
To leave a certain number of his men,
And thus make sure that if his one small ship
Should founder in mid-ocean, and Pinzón
Pursue some treacherous plot, or also fail
To cross the sea in safety—on this isle
There would remain a record of these things,
And his great voyage not fail of its full fruit.
Ample supply the wrecked St. Mary gave
Of timbers ready shaped ; and first was built
A large, strong store-vault, over that a tower
For dwelling and defence, around the tower
Was dug a deep, wide moat, and on the top
Was a great cannon set ; all arms and stores
That could be spared they left. For their new Fort
The name they chose was The Nativity,

In memory of their great deliverance
That Christmas morning. Forty of the crews
Were chosen by the Admiral to remain,
Their governor De Arana, next in power
Pedro Gutierrez and De Escobedo.

On the last day at noon, beside samán-trees
Hung with the shining leaves and large white
flowers

Heavy with scent, of matapalo plants,
Under the palms Columbus made a feast
To entertain the hospitable prince
And his chief followers ; and after that
A great display of European arms
And mimic fighting. On an ebon stool
Guacana sat to watch, on either side
His bearers stood to canopy his head
With broad leaves of the plantain, or brought
herbs

Of balmy scent to rub his hands withal
After his meal. To end the warlike game
Columbus caused the cannon to be fired,
Loaded with stones, as customary then :
The sudden flame and smoke, the rolling noise,
And falling of great trees before the stones,
Startling the numerous parrots from the shade,

Which gleaming red and blue vociferous rose
Shaking the matapalo blossoms down—
With dread and wonder filled the Indian guests ;
Yet strengthened them in joyful confidence
In these great Lords of Thunder, who would use
For their defence such supernatural powers.
Then all was ended, and night drawing on
Columbus and his people, and Guacana
And many of his people, sought the beach
Where the ships' boats lay ready ; then Columbus,
Setting together the small band of men
Whom he should leave, and while the night air
sighed

Soft in the canes and palm-trees, and the moon
Full-orbed shone golden on the hills and sea,
And on his earnest face—he spoke these words :

“ Comrades, through months of sunshine, and
some storm

We have sailed together, and together shared
Labour and hardship and a joy most strange ;
But now we share no longer good or ill,
And when you think that I have brought you here
Where you remain contented, also think
How often you misdoubted and despaired,
And trust me now, and set fast in your hearts

These last words that I speak. In unknown
scenes,

To untried dangers, midst a heathen folk—
With no mistrust I leave you ; for your chief
Is well approved in conduct and in arms,
Ready in sudden action, fit to rule,
A kind and loyal gentleman ; to him
I charge you by your duty to the queen,
Give such direct obedience as you owe
To me, our sovereign's representative.
Nor church you have, nor priest, but you may
keep

Your lives as honest and your hands as clean
By natural prayers amongst these stately groves
Where God is present to you, as of old
He was in Eden, heard amongst the trees—
As clean and honest by those simple prayers
As with the pomp of sacrament and bell
Now for a time denied you. Live in peace
And good faith with the Indians, and the most
In all things that concern their women-folk,
For in those things are all men's hearts alike ;
Despise not their dark colour, they may be
Lower in race than we are, but have souls
That like ours must be saved ; weaker they are,

And we by nature's ordinance their lords,
But not for that despise them, rather aid ;
Forget not they have given us ready love
And kindness as to brothers. To the caciques
See you be true and courteous, specially
To this Guacana, unto whom we owe
A gratitude unmeasured, for good deeds
Done to us without measure or reward.
Go not outside Guacana's territory,
Him do you know, him do you safely trust ;
Keep well together here and you are strong,
But scattered you are nothing.

Now to end,
Give to each other what your own hearts teach,
Good comradeship, the ready heart and hand,
Unshaken loyalty, and if you fail
To thrive and prosper, if on sunken reefs
You go aground and founder—it will be
As the St. Mary did, through your own fault,
In slighting these the last commands I give.
Comrades, farewell, God keep you, and give leave
That here we find you prosperous and well
Ere many months be past." He turned and kissed
Arana on each cheek, and gave his hand
To every man in turn, and then embraced

The gentle chief who wept, with hearty words
Of thanks and friendship, and straight stepped
on board

The waiting boat ; his people followed him
After like farewells, and with many a charge
Of greeting words from those they left behind,
To wife or sweetheart, or old friend, in Spain.
Then, when at dawn the little band beheld
The signal gun on board the Nina flash,
And to the tightening sail the ship replied,
Turning her prow to seaward, and went forth
Slowly into the sunrise—a last look,
A last farewell it seemed to those who gazed,
To those on board saluting : but a shout
Of cheerful courage answered from the beach,
Where De Arana laughed and waved the flag
Of the two kingdoms, and with ringing voice
Led the gay farewell of the little band.

It was the fourth day of the opening year
When thus Columbus spread his homeward sails ;
At first the land-breeze favoured them, but past
The sheltering headland Monte Cristi named,
They came again into the strong east winds
Which had so helped them on their outward
voyage

And now perpetual hindered their return.
On the sixth day the Pinta was descried
Sweeping towards them right before the wind.
And coming near, Pinzón his story told
Excusing to the Admiral, who heard
With outward calm but inward deep distrust ;
Then learning from the crew that stores of gold
They had discovered on these very shores,
With the next favouring breeze, to the south-
east

Followed the coast down to the Rio d'Oro,
Which he so named because of its gold sands.
There finding that Pinzón had carried off
Indians, both youths and girls, against their will
To sell for slaves in Spain, he gave command
That they should be restored, with gifts, and
clothed,

To their own people ; this Pinzón refused,
But forced to yield after high words, remained
Strengthened in hatred of the Admiral's rule.

Leaving the shores of Hayti, on their way,
At many wonderful islands he made pause ;
But spring drew on, and when light westerly
winds

Rose, and grew strong and steady, these delays

Angered so much the mariners that he left
All further search for the great Golden Island,
And steered direct for Spain. Slow was their
course

Across the ocean : checked by dreadful storms
Or driven before the roaring western gales,
They lived but at the mercy of the deep
In their frail open vessels, old and worn
And all unequal to the incessant strife ;
And when the Pinta one dark night seemed lost,
For her too distant lights had disappeared,
They seemed deserted in a world unknown.
Shuddering they thought upon the olden tales
Of ships gone westward never to return,
Of ocean-spirits with ill demons leagued
Never to suffer living ship to cross
The wide deep home.

As thus the days went by,
The tempest growing wilder, and all hope
Of safety for their small ship dying out,
Columbus to his cabin in the poop
Withdrew, and by the lamp's unsteady light
Wrote painfully the story of his voyage
In brief upon a parchment. This he sealed,
Inscribed to the two sovereigns, wrapped it close

In linen waxed, and in a cake of wax,
Then placed it in a barrel, which, again
Closed safely, was set ready on the deck.
A similar writing in like manner wrapped
And closed up, was cast overboard, that thus
Some chronicle might haply be preserved
To tell in Spain the chiefest and most worthy
Of his adventures and the western lands.
He cast this barrel overboard himself,
And standing with both hands upon the stays
He watched it strike the water into foam,
Go down an instant and appear again
Whirling and turning over, then sweep up
The arching waves, and tossing up and down
Go slowly out of sight. "Will that be all,"
He thought, "that shall remain to tell my tale?
Must my queen read it on the silent page,
And never listen to the glowing words
Straight from my heart, which would have told so
well

To her quick thought how well I have fulfilled
My promise to her? would have pictured forth
To her delighted fancy the strange things,
Wondrous and beautiful that I have seen?"
Then looking at his weary, frightened crew

And the poor shivering Indians: "It is hard
For these whom I took forth against their will!
Must I behold them die this dismal death
Who deem myself their leader, heaven-endowed?
These helpless creatures as my trophies come,
The first-fruits of my Christian embassy,
Must I lose these? Must I myself no more
See my dear sons nor guide them through their
youth?

Give me these lives, O Lord, for unto Thee
All things are possible."

The ship went up
Upon the great waves rising swift and strong,
And down again until the following wave
Hung overtopping her, and on and on;
And the wild shrieking of the tightened ropes
And the loud hollow roaring overhead
And crashing of the waters all around,
Kept all lips silent; the grey firmament
Seemed close upon them, morn and eve the sun,
Invisible, shed a thin, pale yellow glare
Through the dull grey made lurid. Thus they
went

As the winds would, and where they knew not well,
Till in the thunder and the driving rain,

The cry of "Land ahead !" rang through the night,
And lying-to as best they might till sunrise,
Amidst the yellow morning mists they saw,
Joyful, the Rock of Cintra, and the mouth
Of the wide-spreading Tagus. How like home
It was indeed to work their way along
Through other ships, to hear familiar speech,
To see the land on either side, and feel
The crazy barque go quietly. Even more rejoiced
The seamen were than when their weary eyes
Saw the New World dim-looking through the dawn !

Up the steep streets and through the admiring
crowd

That pressed to see and touch these very men,
Who had sailed across the demon-haunted seas
And had come back in safety ; who had done
The very thing so talked of and despised
As beyond words impossible, condemned
Even as an outrage against God Himself—
Columbus was conveyed, a monarch's guest.
Bitter the thought that mingled with delight
In the king's mind, whilst he with open grace
And royal hospitality received
The heroic wanderer, whom he might have held
In his own service to this glorious end ;

And whilst he listened to the glowing tale
Poured forth by that sweet voice which long ago
Had well convinced him in his inner mind.
Now secret foes, as formerly, combined
Against Columbus, stirred by jealousy
Of Spanish glory and by greed of gold,
And even his life was aimed at ; but the king
In princely fashion treated him, besought
His longer stay, and when he would be gone
Offered him escort, horses, wagons, mules,
To enter Spain by land for greater ease
And safety than by sea. Yet thirst for gold
And conquest wrought as formerly, to lead
His nobler self astray. His leave was given
To send a mighty armament in his name
To take possession of the new-found lands,
And set his rule up solid and secure
Before Columbus crossed the seas again.
Nor knew the Admiral of those treacherous thoughts
When he, his crew refreshed, his ships repaired,
The storms somewhat abated—took his leave
And spread his sails for Palos de Moguér.

Meanwhile at Palos, through the winter time
The rough, tempestuous weather filled the town
With growing fear ; such frequent terrible storms

Were never known before along that coast,
And every sailor's hut and every house
Whence on that fearful voyage had gone forth
Husband or son, grew sadder with the months ;
And in St. Mary's convent on the cliff
The prior so confident once, at every dawn
With sadder eyes gazed out to the dim west,
At every sunset made more hopeless watch
For three dark specks against the crimson sky ;
And when in March the warm returning spring
Brought flowers and blossoms and reviving green
But no news of the adventurers, hope died out
In dark and sullen sorrow.

Strong March winds

After a time returning, ceased again ;
And at the convent-gate when rising morn
Made all things cheerful,—with sad wistful eyes,
Stood Juan Pérez, gazing as his wont
All round the horizon, but could find no sail
At all upon the sea, and turned about
To go down into Palos on affairs ;
But as he turned he heard a childish voice
Cry, “ Let me go down with you,” and Fernando
Came dancing through the gate, and laid his hand
Upon the father's frock, who kindly smiled,

Drawing him round where he might see the sea
And any boats thereon, and sadly said,
“ The fishermen have all come in betimes,
Most likely when the tide turned in the night,
There are no boats, alas ! ” Fernando then :
“ You say no boats ! See at the river’s mouth
There is a strange ship lying.” His companion
Started and turned. “ Yes, yes, one of the ships !
Bless thee, my child ! Pray God that he be there ! ”
“ My father’s ship ! We will run quickly down
To meet him first.”

“ My boy, it is too far,
We must go soberly.” And he gently checked
The eager child who pulled him by the hand,
But his own steps went faster, and he scarce
Could stay his strides to suit the little feet
Which had more will than power to hasten on.
Now the strange ship weighed anchor, spread her
sails,
And turned her head and slowly moved up stream ;
But soon the high rocks hid her from their sight
As they went down their long and sandy way
Beneath the fir-trees, leading to the town.
On entering Palos, at St. George’s church
They stopped, and bade the sacristan prepare

When he should hear for certain that Columbus
Was come back safe, to have the church-bells ring
Their loudest, gladdest welcome ; but if sad
The news, if he were dead or lost, to toll
The solemn minute strokes. Then hurrying on
They sought Fernandez Garcia at his house,
Who hastened to go with them ; farther down
They called for the Pinzóns, and met Rodriguez,
Pilot of Lepe, their old messenger,
Full of the news ; and ever as they went
One and another townsman joined the throng,
And many an anxious woman, for by this
All knew that but one vessel had returned,
Neither the Admiral's vessel nor Pinzón's,
And must the *Nina* be, yet was square-rigged.
The sound of shouting reached them from below,
And awe and wonder with the sorrow mixed
And with the exultation ; it was like
The coming back of someone from the dead.
Fernando and the prior went hurrying on
Foremost amidst the crowd, and some strong man,
Likely Rodriguez, caught Fernando up
And carried him, for he could run no more.

Down to the river half the town had come
And saw the *Nina* lying broadside there,

Taking her sails down, drawing in her oars
And casting out her anchor ; on the poop
The Admiral himself in rich attire,
And tawny men behind him, scanty clad,
Wearing tall feather crowns and golden gauds,
Gazing with plaintive eyes on the strange scene.
Some of the crowd into the water pressed,
And eager welcomes, questions, kisses, tears,
Were breathless mingled ; and yet louder shouts
As down the ship's side slow Columbus came
And stepped upon the plank that reached the
shore,

Roughened and aged with all his toils, but crowned
With manly joy. The mariners leaped off
Into the water, stretching eager hands,
Asking for friends, embracing wife or child,
And giving hasty answers ; whilst the prior
Embraced Columbus, and the little boy
Sprang with a cry into his father's arms,
Kissed the bronzed face, and laid his curly head
Into his neck contented ; and the people
Shouted afresh ; and ever overhead
Rang on the chiming of St. George's bells.
Columbus and the child moved slowly on,
He and his sailors first, and then the prior

Leading the people, and all went together
Up to St. George's church to render thanks,
Mingled with tears for those who came not home,
And for Pinzón still tossing on the sea
Or maybe lost already with his crew.
When prayers and psalms were over, on the steps
At the church-door Columbus stood, and told
To the assembled people a short tale
Of the great voyage, far stranger to their ears
Than legends of the miracles of saints ;
Next he made haste to forward to the queen,
Who was at Barcelona with the court,
The news of his arrival ; and then cared
For his poor Indians, three of whom lay sick
With the great hardships and unwonted cold
Of their long passage, whereof one had died.
For all his other cares a day sufficed,
And he departed with his little son
Taking six Indians and his treasured stores
From the New World. Still, as they journeyed on,
At every town *alcaldé*, at the gates
With the chief citizens, awaited him,
And when he left it took him forth again
With like observances ; the common crowd
Ever flocked after with the best, to fill

Their ear and fancy with the latest words
Of his strange travels.

So to Seville come,
Diego met him, and they there abode
Till he received his summons to the court
In admiration so expressed, and honour,
That even his eager heart could ask no more.
At Seville with deep pity he received
The tidings of Pinzón's untimely end ;
Who, driven so far on that tempestuous night
From his companion ship, had surely deemed
As well he might, that she so poor and worn
Could by no miracle weather out the storm,
And that the Admiral certainly was lost ;
Then, tempted thus by opportunity
Easy and unexpected, carried out
That very treachery Columbus feared.
He came to Spain, wrote to the king and queen
That he had found old Asia, and asked leave
To come to court and tell them all his tale ;
Then shaped his course for home, and up the Tinto
Was sailing proudly, when one came on board,
Who told him of the Admiral's safe return
And summons to the sovereigns. Struck with
shame

He landed far from Palos, and went home
Alone and secretly, there to receive
The sovereigns' written word of stern reproach
And absolute refusal or to see
Or to hear from him more. Into his heart
The blow went deep ; this was his one disgrace ;
For to his blood and temper treachery
Had been an alien and unthought-of crime ;
He lay down on his bed, nor spoke nor ate,
But groaning, in his darkened chamber died.

In Catalonia east, beside the sea
Stands Barcelona, from Phœnician days
Active and great in commerce until now ;
A strong rebellious city, she maintains
A large sway on the ocean, and on land
Holds her own liberties and chartered rights
Steadfast against intruders ; many-towered
She looks back on a mountain-girdled plain
Fertile and fair with gardens of delight ;
Before her sees the deep-green waters fill
Her mole-protected harbour where throng close
The ships of many nations ; to her right
Steep cliffs command the water ; and beyond,
The glittering ocean meets the sapphire sky.
In the first April days her streets were thronged

With eager watchers, silence on her piers,
No voice amongst her ships ; for through the plain
Slow winds a strange procession to her gates,
And not a man remains at any toil,
And not an infant in the quiet house ;
The mothers bring their babes to door or roof,
The children slip away to join the crowd
And be amongst the first to see and shout ;
Ladies of all degrees in gorgeous show
Crowd balcony and house-top ; banners wave,
Flowers thickly woven swing across the streets
And lie in heaps for casting on the way.

The young men have gone forth—the youthful
lords

Rejoicing in their chivalrous style, attired
In gold and velvet, on their haughty steeds,
And with their warlike followers make display
Of horse and foot, banners and glittering arms,
And jubilant and sounding instruments.
They have gone forth in this glad state to meet
Don Christopher Columbus, Admiral,
Vice-regal lord of ocean and of land
In the vast regions of the unknown West ;
He who a year ago at Santa Fé
Scarce won the royal sanction to go forth,

Bewailed or mocked at, alien and despised,
Late counted lost in failure and despair ;
He who returns a master of success,
Lord of strange roads, the uncrowned emperor
Of the rich, vast unknown ; wealth in his hand,
And tidings on his lips of things till now
Ungessed at, nor imagined, nor conceived.
Faint swells the music of his coming, sweet
To high-strung senses as celestial songs,
And listening silence settles on the town.
Slow to the walls, beneath the hazy sun
Across the flowery valley they have come,
And entering through the gateway of the fort
By heavy turrets flanked, wind through the streets
Between the low red houses. As they pass
Flowers are cast down in showers before their feet,
The silence changes into frantic cries.
First came the soldiers tramping to the sound
Of warlike music—trumpet, drum, and horn ;
A troop of horsemen next in shining steel ;
And then, upborne for every eye to see,
The scaly lizard, and the turtle's shell,
Bright-feathered birds set standing as in life,
Others alive, glancing from side to side
Silent and fearful. Trays of musky pods ;

The purple cacao-beans, and brown-skinned yams ;
Bananas dried ; the huge brown cocoa-nut,
Its fibrous husk and milk-white flesh displayed ;
Maize, set like pearls upon a sceptre's head,
Yellow as amber in its rustling sheaths ;
Red capsicums, and balls of cotton thread,
And soft white cotton bursting from dark husks ;
Blocks of rare minerals and of curious woods ;
Large pearly shells that gleamed with rainbow
lights ;
Cups filled with gold-dust, knots of golden ore ;
Gold coronet, or band for neck or arm.
Next came the tawny Indians, with their rude,
Strange implements of warfare in their hands,
Painted with gaudy hues as they were wont,
In feather crowns and golden ornaments.
When these appeared the clamorous shouting
ceased,
And wonder fixed all eyes in breathless awe
Beholding human beings unlike all,
Spaniard or Moor or African, ever seen ;
A silent awe that sudden changed to cries
Of rapturous rejoicing when appeared
The reverend white head, the stately form,
The weather-beaten face both grave and glad,

Of Christopher Columbus, as he rode,
Proudly escorted by the youthful lords,
Into the square before the royal hall
Where waited the two sovereigns.

On a dais

In a vast lofty chamber richly hung
With pictured arras, and the polished floor
Crossed by embroidered carpets, stood two thrones
Beneath gold woven curtains ; there in state
Sat Isabella and her royal spouse,
Surrounded by the grandest of her dames,
And in the presence stood the very chief
Of the nobility of Castile and Leon,
Of Arragon and Catalonia.

The jalousies were open, a soft light
Filled the vast chamber, and the warm, sweet air
Brought in the various clamour of the crowd,
The sudden shouts, the silence, and again
The outbursts of rejoicing that swelled out
Louder and louder to the very gates.
Then flew the doors wide open, and came in
Before all else Columbus, Admiral ;
Then the proud nobles who attended him,
And after them the Indians, and then slaves
Carrying his various treasures on their heads.

Up the long room, simple and proud he came,
The sense of his achievement in his gait,
His head uncovered, and upon his face
The serious smile which those who loved him,
loved.

On such an errand coming, he appeared
As one of the world's fathers, Adam or Noah,
As one for whom the world was first create,
Who had beheld the glory of its dawn.
The sovereigns rose, and when he would have
knelt

Queen Isabella stretching out her hand
Forbade such humbleness from one so great,
Saying : " Most welcome are you, Admiral,
Greater our joy to see you here again
Than even for the news of a new world
Which you have brought us." But he willingly
knelt,

Kissing their hands with joy. They raised him
up

And made him sit beside them on the dais,
An honour beyond honours ; all the court
Pressed round to hear him speak. Amongst them
stood

De Talavera, the Grand Cardinal,

De Quintanilla, his old friend De Deza,
Las Casas, Peter Martyr—all such men
As any man were proud should hear him tell
His best achievements ; and then eagerly
As a glad schoolboy at his mother's side,
And gravely as some prophet in old times,
Through many hours he told his passionate tale,
And ended thus : “ These gentle savages,
Simple as childlike, I have not baptized
But brought them, madam, in their harmless faith
For your good pleasure, first-fruits from your
hand

Of the great harvest waiting ; white the field,
The labourers only wanting. As I came
Up the long valley of the Guadalquivir
And saw but eighty cities where of old
So many hundreds flourished, I rejoiced
That your new kingdoms should receive from you
Cities, not lose them, should be won for you
Clean of all bloodshed. Not as conqueror
Shall I go out again at your command
But as a father to his waiting home.
And more than I have yet done will I do,
I will find yet new countries, nor desist
Till Christ fill all the world from sea to sea.”

“ Madam, my tale is done. Would I could tell
As readily the fervour of my love,
Faithful and duteous, to yourself, your spouse,
And all your royal house ; my heartfelt thanks
Beyond the use of words.” Again he bent
His lips upon her hand. With swimming eyes,
With clasped and upraised hands, the sovereigns
knelt,
And all their court knelt with them. Then the
priests
And waiting choristers, to sweet instruments
With mixed harmonious voices loudly sang
“ Te Deum Laudamus.” The old hymn
Went sounding up to heaven. Then to the house,
The goodly house assigned him, he was taken
With tumult of rejoicing. At no time
Could he go forth but great crowds followed him
Gazing and curious ; and King Ferdinand
Riding in state, upon his right Prince Juan,
Would bring upon his left the Admiral.
The nobles made great feasts and festivals
To honour him, and with each other vied
In lavishness of grandeur and display ;
By the Grand Cardinal he was received
Royally, even as a prince might be—

At a great banquet, midst the highest guests—
Set on his right hand, in a chair of state.
The sovereigns granted him a coat-of-arms,
For his crest choosing islands on the waves,
And leave to carry with it their own crests,
A castle and a lion, on his shield.

The tidings of these great discoveries thrilled
All the known nations with an awe-struck joy
Throughout their borders. Priestly Rome rejoiced
In opportunity of wider sway,
And pagan souls brought in to the true faith ;
The learned men long-time expecting this,
In scientific prophecy fulfilled ;
Monarch and noble, and the general people,
In visions of like fortunes for themselves :
For all things now seemed possible to all,
As if they had beheld another world,
Larger, more glorious, made before their eyes.

CANTO X.

RETURN TO HAYTI—RETURN TO SPAIN—THIRD VOYAGE.

I N late September, on the sheltering bay,
And by the piers of Cadiz, day and night
Three loftier ships, and fourteen caravels
Received their burdens, and through all the town
Perpetual thronged a bold excited crowd ;
Both lookers-on and those twelve hundred souls
Selected for this new voyage to the West
By the two crowns ordained. Soldiers were there,
Merchants and priests, peasants and artisans,
Women and children ; also gentlemen
Of good birth and good breeding, as De Ojeda
Who rode so fast with the queen's signet ring ;
Others of baser nature, mere adventurers.
All crowded to the ships, the busy streets
And busy harbour rang with noise and zeal ;
The Admiral in the midst with his proud son

Controlled and ordered all.

On the last noon,
When labour paused a little, and all hands
Sought some repose, he with his son Diego
And younger brother, turning from the crowd
Walked out upon the sea-wall, and he stood,
And gazing earnestly across the sea,
Said to his brother, "Dost thou call to mind
The talk we had together in the dark
The evening this my eldest son was born?"
And laid his hand on young Diego's shoulder ;
"How I declared my rooted certainty
Of western lands, and my assured belief
That one day I should reach them by the sea?
Visions, thou saidst, and with Correa laughed,
That I should deem them as within the bounds
Of sober purpose. All that then I dreamed
Has now been done, but on this very Mole
When first I sought in Spain a helping hand,
I have stood dreaming it was all a dream,
And so forlorn of every outward hope
Or sign of help, that sometimes a cold shade
As of despair assailed me ; then the waves,
Rolling from westward, beating regular
In ordered cadence on this rocky wall,

And ever fresh from human guile or fear,
Reproached me as unfaithful, and I felt
That all this," and he waved his outstretched hand
Towards the fleet, "would surely come to pass.
All this and more has come, but in my joy
I sorrow for Bartholomew, my pride
In any earthly thing is but as half
Unless he brotherly share it ; this the most
For he has held my every scheme as his,
And with his whole heart would have furthered
this,

And now have sailed with us exultant forth.
Whether earth hides him, or the seas have drowned,
We know not, and this only cloud hangs dark,
Shadowing the perfect triumph of these days."

Before a fair wind in the sunny glow
Of the next noontide sailed the white-winged fleet,
Freighted with a new city, carrying out
Twelve hundred living souls across the sea,
Leaving unwilling thousands on the land—
From that same Cadiz where, nine years ago,
Columbus landed with his little son.

Whilst still the echoes of that triumph rang
In all men's ears, he whose uncertain fate
Columbus mourned, was journeying to Spain ;

Shipwreck, imprisonment, and poverty
Had wrought together so, that only now
He brought the message of the English king,
That he would help Columbus to his voyage.
In France he heard the wild and wondrous tale
Of the New World ; and then in Seville learned
He came too late, his brother had gone forth
Already on his second westward voyage ;
To him with swelling heart Diego told
Of all his father's honours and success,
And the triumphant sailing of the fleet.
Nor was it long before Bartholomew
With his two nephews, now Prince Juan's pages,
Went up by royal summons to the court,
Where he was known already for a man
Strong and sagacious, of unflinching will,
A bold, skilled navigator ; and in spring
The sovereigns chose him to command the ships
Sent with supplies to the new colonies ;
And for his brother's sake to give him aid
In government and voyages of research
And the good comfort of his company.

Bartholomew and his three ships went forth,
And crossed the seas, and by the verdant plains,
The rocky headlands, and the many bays

Of Hispaniola gently held their way.
But ere they reached the point where by the charts
They were to find the settlement, they saw
In front of the high mountains and the plains
And circling round a lake, a half-built town.
A stone wall stood about it, and within
Houses of stone, a church amidst the palms,
And lesser wooden dwellings ranged in streets,
A fortress and great store-house ; everywhere
Spaniards and the brown natives in the sun.
So they cast anchor, and whilst yet they gazed,
Forth from the wooden pier beside the town
A long canoe came gliding through the surf ;
In the stern sat Diego, on his head
A hat of palm-leaf, sitting on either side
Luxán and Carvajál. Bartholomew
In wondering joy received them, and they told
Here had Columbus founded the new town,
Having abandoned Fort Nativity ;
And now had sailed upon another voyage
Of fresh discovery on the Cuban coast,
Leaving his brother ruler.

“ It is time ”

Diego said, when they sat down to rest
At evening in the governor's stone-built house,

“ That thou wert here. So large a company
Of inexperienced settlers in a land
New and exciting, such a restless troop
Of young hot-blooded and high-handed nobles
All wild with dreams of endless stores of gold,
Is a great charge, and to my nature strange
Beyond my powers, and altogether wrong.”

“ But tell me,” said Bartholomew, “ why you are
here

And not at Fort Nativity, where the boys
Told me their father left the settlement
On his return to Spain ? ” Diego answered :
“ ’T is the beginning of sorrows. We sailed forth
Across the mighty ocean full of joy
And proud expectance, finding on our way
The beautiful Antilles, the great sea
And islands of the terrible Carribees,
And everywhere new dangers, new delights ;
Then drawing towards the coast beside the river
Where Christopher left the fortress, eagerly
We look to meet the comrades left behind,
A few amongst strange people, and we thought
What great delight would fill them when they saw
Our fleet at morning ; for the sun had set
Before we turned the nearest cliffs, and lay

Perhaps a half-league from the river's mouth,
For in the darkness it were vain to tempt
The treacherous reefs. We anchored for the night
And fired two guns to signal our approach,
But none came out to us, no gun replied,
There was no light nor any sign of life,
And we watched anxiously through many hours.
Then a canoe stole out, by Indians manned,
Who when we much persuaded came on board,
And sad the tale they told. Not one remained
Of all our comrades left. Some in disputes
Among themselves were slain ; some had roamed
off

And taken Indian wives in distant villages ;
In bloody raids from warlike mountain tribes
Many were killed—amongst them De Arana,
Upon whose side the chief Guacana fought,
Was overpowered and wounded ; cruel wrongs
Done by the white men to their Indian friends,
And a revenge as cruel on the whites :
Thus all were gone, the fortress sacked and burned.
This was the welcome to our Christopher !
And when he prayed the good chief to receive
Some image of the Virgin that should hang
About his neck, and he repulsed in fear

The gracious offering, hearing the white men
Held it as holy—Christopher was grieved
Almost to tears.

 We left that mournful place
Mournful and fever-haunted, and came here.
Upon this lovely plain we raised our huts
With cheerful labour, tilled and sowed our fields,
Laid out our streets and squares, and named our
town

Isabella, thus to honour our great queen.
To raise the church was Christopher's dearest care,
To Father Boyle he trusted it, and me,
And we worked well, and for the starry feast
Of Bethlehem's royal Visitants were prepared.
First came the consecration, then High Mass
With robes, processions, swinging incense, chants,
And all the due solemnities observed.

The wondering Indians watched, and understood
That this was our religion, and when swelled
The bell's melodious voice, their souls were struck
With mingled joy and fear ; they wept, they knelt,
They laid their heads in dust, and seemed to think
The voice of the Great Spirit spoke to them.

Short were our joyful hours ! Sore maladies
Broke out amongst us, weary from the voyage,

Not knowing the new climate or its needs,
Sore pressed for food, and our young gay hidalgos,
Not used to labour, nor to much obedience,
Gloomy and discontented. Worst of all,
On Christopher himself the fever fell,
And he was stricken down for many weeks ;
Yet rested not, but ever ruled and planned ;
Then hearing from the Indians many tales
About Cibao, a great land of gold
Beyond the southern mountains, he sent out
A band with De Ojeda to explore,
And these returning after many a toil
Brought gold-dust from the streams, and from the
rocks

Knots of the shining kingly ore itself.
All this determined him to go himself
And choose the spots for mining, and good sites
For stations of defence. But on the eve
Of his departure there was found sure proof—
Canst thou believe it, brother ?—of a plot
Against his life, contrived by Bernal Diaz—
One of the bolder and unscrupulous sort
Yet holding here an office of great trust—
To seize the ships not yet returned to Spain,
Return there with them, and by slanderous tales

Turn the queen's mind against him. In the buoy
Of a ship homeward bound the writing lay."

Then said Bartholomew : " And what did Christopher?

Hang them all sure, and Bernal Diaz first ? "

" No, Bernal Diaz' rank placed him beyond
The reach of common justice. Lightly he dealt
With the inferior mutineers, poor fools,
Too lightly far, and sent their chief to Spain
To take his trial there.

That traitor gone,

Upon his venture Christopher set forth,
And took with him four hundred well-armed men,
And all equipments for the forts and mines,
Leaving me here chief ruler. Having crossed
On the first day the wide and wooded plain,
He set in front his band of cavalry,
The young hidalgos clad in burnished steel,
And with their waving flags and trumpets' sound,
And troops of Indians hanging round their rear,
They went straight up the mountains, turning east
As they rose higher ; the advancing band
Clearing the way, and making a rough road.
And thus ascending to the highest pass,
Called by us now the Pass of the Hídalgos,

Christopher coming forward to the front,
Beheld as it were Paradise ; a wide vale
Lay sloping down before him, grand and fair
As is Granada's valley. Far as eye
Could reach it spread in grandeur, soft, adorned
With trees gigantic, falling streams that flowed
Into calm affluent rivers, making way
Majestic south and east ; river and vale
Forest and mountain lessening to the sight,
Distinct in the clear air, till they became
Dim with extreme of distance. Everywhere
Stood light and gay the Indian villages
And cultivated fields ; and on his right
Rose the rough mountains of the golden ores.
His swelling heart rejoiced, and that broad vale
He named the Royal Vega. Everywhere
The cheerful native people, and the chiefs
Received them even as angels, even as gods,
Loving them and yet fearing.

Long it were
To tell thee now how everything went well
In that excursion ; how the youthful lords
Ready and brave in any warlike task
Or difficult adventure, for the time
Forgot all discontent. When they returned

We showed good progress made about the town,
And in the fields and gardens, but all else
Was but a mournful tale. The fever still
Striking our people down, half our stores spoiled,
None coming out from Spain ; and the poor Indians,
Having learned to dread us whom they once received
Joyful, as benefactors and as friends,
Bringing but little corn. Thus were we forced
To hold even priests and nobles to such rules
Of work and famine-rations as we framed
For all the colonists, and ourselves no less
Strictly obeyed—and then of wounded pride,
Scant food, unwonted toil, and broken hopes,
Many hidalgos died, both old and young,
And on our heads the whole reproach is cast.
Thus it begins ; God knows how it will end !”
“ Then thou art here sole ruler ?”

“ With the aid
Of a good council—Sanchez de Carvajál,
Corónel and Luxán, and Father Boyle.
He is however never on my side,
And now that Christopher has gone forth again,
The stronger and less scrupulous colonists
Refuse me all obedience. Those who work
At the hill stations rule things as they will,

Led in all license by the Spanish general,
Who is a man to whom no thing is good,
And no good thing is sacred. Spaniards ever
Bear ill the rule of strangers, and from me,
Who have not fame nor rank like Christopher,
Nor lived like him for many years in Spain,
They will not take it ; and their ill deeds,
Passing in cruelty words of mine to tell,
Amongst the Indians, have made dangerous foes
Of all the bravest, and destroyed the rest.
And now the general hurries back to Spain
In fear of Christopher's return, and leaves
None here to rule the lawless soldiery.”
Then said Bartholomew, “ But for how long
Has he gone forth, and left the land and thee
To this unbridled folk ? ”

“ Nay, nay, he thought
All discontent appeased, and sure means taken
To keep good order here. He has gone forth
To explore in Cuba, the vast continent
He has discovered. Very much he fears
Lest other nations, following on our track,
May pass us by, make fresh discoveries
And rob him of the crown of his achievements ;
Then love of ocean wanderings and the thirst

For new adventures and new sights and scenes
Draw him away, as memories of old lands
Draw many another home."

"Aye, ever thus

It is within him as his very life."

"Yes," said Diego, "but the man whose house
Is yet abuilding should remain to watch,
If he would have it well and surely built.
It was not well imagined from the first
To send this mixed and ill-assorted crowd.
We should have first built towns and villages,
Reared flocks and herds and tilled the fertile soil,
Nor looked at all to the uncertain stores
Sent out from Spain ; lived kindly with the natives,
Persuading them to traffic, and to learn
Our better ways in industries and arts.
Then when the land abounded in its stores,
And year by year our numbers had increased
To power and safety, we might well have turned
To the great work of setting up our rule
Firmly throughout the land ; have worked the
 mines
Of gold and costly stones ; grown sugar-cane ;
Planted new forests of these various trees
Whose fine-hued woods alike are serviceable

For ornament or use—and Christopher
Might have gone forth to find new lands and seas,
And win fresh glory after his own heart,
Nor left misfortune here”—His brother then :

“ One man is gifted one way, and another
Unlike and unlike gifted, is as good,
As fine a man as he, and I know none,
Nor ever have known, like our Christopher.”

“ Thou comest next to him,” Diego said,

“ And were I Christopher I should at once
Appoint thee adelantado, 't is thy place.”

“ And right well I could serve him ! Would to
God

We had him back here, safe and sound, again ! ”

Summer had passed, the early autumn waned,
But still Columbus came not, nor sent word,
And his impatient brothers watched in fear ;
When suddenly a joyful rumour spread
That three small ships were coming from the east
And without doubt they were the Admiral's ships.
The brothers hastened to the pile-built quay,
And in their swiftest skiff shot through the surf
To meet the caravels, but on coming near
The Admiral's vessel, when their Indians held
Their dripping paddles still, and the canoe

With slackening movement glided to her side,
Their eager eyes that searched each vessel's crew
And the gaunt faces looking from the decks,
Could nowhere find their brother, and they learned
He lay in a deep swoon ; for, over-wrought
By labour and long watching, when at last
He found his ships in safety, all his force
Suddenly left him, and he lay as dead,
Only slight quiverings round his eyes and mouth
Giving assurance of the life within.
They carried him on shore and to his house
Amidst a grieving crowd, and whilst he lay
Unconscious on his bed, and faithful friends
Watched long for signs of re-awakening life,
The mariners told their tale.

First of the storms :

If they had ever thought there were such storms
Possible anywhere—such whirling winds,
Such sheets of purple lightning crossed by darts
Of jagged blinding fire, hour after hour
Filling both earth and heaven ; such awful sounds
Of ceaseless thunder roaring terrible ;
Such rains—nay, streams—nay, sheets of water
pouring
Continual from the sky—nothing on earth,

Rewards or penalties, had brought them there
Away from their own land !

Further they told
Of mountainous Jamaica, grand and fair ;
Her waterfalls white springing to the sea,
Her forests interchanged with fertile vales,
Lively with villages, where Indians dwelt.
More warlike and more vigorous than as yet
They had beheld, meeting these unknown beings
With boldest opposition. Checked at once
By the strong arrows from the Spanish bows,
And by their fierce dogs frightened, for like beasts
Or of such size they had not seen before—
They understood at last the friendly mind
In which the Admiral came. Here he set up,
As was his wont, the Holy Crucifix
Whereby he took possession of the land
For his two sovereigns in the name of Christ.
Along the Cuban coast, through brackish swamps
And slime-encumbered channels, slow they crept,
Through brown clear waters, under the arched roots
Of numberless mangroves, death-exhaling trees,
Where alligators reared their armoured heads
And grim jaws from the mud ; where venomous
snakes

Hung motionless from the boughs, and stinging
things

Threatened the foot, or haunted the thick air ;

The sea a sickly white or poisonous green.

By wilderness of impenetrable reeds

Tangled and tall they passed. Their food had
failed,

By the sea-water and long keeping spoiled,

And no fresh water.

Another time

They came into a tract of fairy isles,

Scattered for leagues upon a crystal sea,

Gem-like and green or spread in glittering sands,

Or rising in low hills by forests crowned—

So exquisite, so fresh, so sweet with flowers

And spicy shrubs, so gay with singing birds

And rainbow-tinted butterflies in clouds,

They named them The Queen's Gardens.

Other where

Along the balmy shores of Ornofay,

Beside the wide and blue-black ocean, stood

Well-peopled villages amidst lofty trees

Hung with the fruit of thickly-clustered vines,

Beneath whose wild luxuriance after dark

The natives danced to music soft and dull,

Singing monotonous songs. On all this coast
They were received with joy and reverence,
For from the north the tidings had been spread
Of heaven-descending beings who had come
To bless the Indian peoples. Here they saw
The worship of the Zemes, lesser gods
Of elements and seasons. Here it was
That having gone on shore at early dawn
To set up a great Crucifix to claim
The place for Christ and Spain, and then with-
drawn

Into the solemn coolness of the trees,
Lofty and still, to celebrate the Mass—
There gathered in the shade a silent band
Of Indians, gravely waiting till the end,
When there came forward an old reverend man,
Clad in white flowing garments like a priest.
He spoke long with Columbus, calling it well
To worship the Great Spirit ; charging him
Who was a mighty warrior in command
Of mighty warriors, to beware the sins
Of arrogance and pride, for that all men
Dying were taken, if unjust and cruel,
To a place dark and hopeless ; if in peace
And justice they had lived, into delights

And happiness forever. "Therefore then,
If thou art mortal, if thou hast due thoughts
Of death and the hereafter, use thy power
To no man's hurt, nor do thou any wrong
To those that wrong not thee. For all men's gods,
Our own Great Spirit, and the white man's God
Alike are just and terrible." Columbus
In reverence kissed his hand, and much rejoiced
Over this evidence of the simple faith
These untaught peoples carried in their souls
Ready for full conversion to the Truth.

Sailing again in vague and eager quest
Of the famed Golden Island, they were driven
By stress of weather on Jamaica's coast,
And in the occasional calms and gentler airs
Often the friendly caciques came on board
With gifts and timely aid, and to enquire
From the interpreters the things of Spain.
Few were their tranquil days, even when they
cleared

Jamaica's troubled waters labouring still
In furious tempests, and their straining ships
Leaking, nigh water-logged. Thus toiling on
Often they lost their bearings nor could tell
What seas they sailed, yet ever held their course

By Hayti's southern coast, and when at last
The sky grew clear and the wind fell, they lay
North of the island's eastern cape, *Cabrón*,
Discovered by them on their way from Spain.
Here, the worst dangers past, the worst toils done,
So great had been the Admiral's fatigues,
Watching by day and night, scarce knowing sleep,
That with the sudden ease his strength gave way,
He sank into a deep and death-like trance,
And his scared people with all possible speed
Brought him to *Isabella*. This the tale
The weary mariners told.

The hours passed by.

When from his death-like trance Columbus woke,
His slow-unclosing eyes beside him saw
Bartholomew's stern face, and watched it light
With sudden joy like sunshine on a rock,
Whilst his own spirit with an answering joy,
Gazed at him still and childlike. Week by week
He lay in silence, but when peace and rest
Had brought some little strength, he could refrain
From speech no longer, and with lifted hand—
“Listen,” he said, “My brothers! I have sailed
Far, far along the Asian shores, nor doubt
I soon shall win the straits which join these seas

To the great Indian waters lying round
The Aurea Chersonesus. Thence shall sail
Westward by Diaz Mendez' Cape of Storms,
Guinea and Senegal, and that long coast
The boast of Portugal, and by the Gates
Of ancient Hercules triumphant close
The perfect circuit of the rounded world.
A coming home that shall excel the first
As the full summer glory puts to shame
The colder, paler light of early spring."
Thus he rejoicing spoke.

From this time forth

Anxieties and troubles never ceased :
The Admiral with unresting energy,
Even on the sick bed where for months he lay,
Bartholomew, by him appointed head
Next to himself, Adelantado styled—
Strove ceaselessly with mutiny and wrong.
Strong men continually turned to ill
What they had best intended, and that ill
Still fructifying further, frequent forced
Stern deeds upon them, and harsh-seeming rule ;
Severe requital of their people's crimes ;
Heavy exactions from the native chiefs,
Who, save Guacana, banded in a league

Of uttermost hostility to the whites,
By difficult persuasion were brought in
To peaceful treaties—and not Caonabo
Lord of the Golden Hills. Him De Ojeda
Snared lion-like in his fastnesses ; he owned
In him alone a higher than himself
Amongst the Spaniards, and ere many months
Sickened and died of his captivity.
Forts were set up to awe the pleasant vales,
The gold-mines were unworked, the fields untilled.
Every stern act and every sad event
And other men's misdeeds, in tangled skein,
By deep and bitter malice were so told
In Spain by speech and letter, as to seem
Clear evidence of the solemn charges made
Against the Admiral to the Sovereign Pair.
With many kinds of baseness he was charged ·
With keeping back the treasure of the crowns
For his own purposes, and with enslaving
And selling into slavery many Indians
For the enrichment of his private purse ;
With favouring his own friends, though unworthy ;
With harsh injustice to the Spanish nobles
And all who stood in favour with the crowns ;
And with assuming more than royal powers,

A royal retinue, a royal state,
And manners insolent ; with cruelty
In his discharge of justice. Some of those
Whom he had kindest used and most befriended,
Witnessed to shameful falsehoods without shame,
And even the helpless Indians being taught
To think their many sufferings sprang from him,
In poor pathetic anger joined their word
To the injurious tale.

To meet these charges,
To speak himself to Isabella's heart,
And urge his colony's many pressing needs
So falsely told, so poorly served before,²
Resolved him to depart at once for Spain ;
Appointing first, as Chief Judge of the Island,
Francis Roldán, who heretofore had seemed
A man most trustworthy, of a strong, clear wit—
Worthy to be Chief Judge, but was at heart
Unscrupulous, ambitious, and became
A traitor and a leader of revolt.

Threatened, maligned, Columbus came to Spain,
But here a royal welcome he received
From the two sovereigns ; every mark of trust,
The highest public honours—making plain
That neither Isabella nor her spouse

Did those assaults disturb, nor shake their faith
In their long-trusted servant. Large estates
In Hayti and in Spain, titles and rights
Making him equal of their old grandees,
They gave to him for ever, and his heirs ;
And added to his proud armorial bearings
This prouder motto :

A Castilla y à Leon
Nuevo Mundo dió Colon.

To Castile and to Leon a New World Columbus
gave.

They for the colony promised liberal aid ;
But wedding festivals and lavish dowers
For their new married children, costly wars
By Ferdinand waged in Italy and France,
And aid to foreign allies, in quick stream
Emptied the royal treasuries. Ships were scarce ;
New leaders on the seas new countries found
As fresh and full of promise ; the new wars
And the new countries, and Old Italy
Gay and romantic, drew to them alike
All bold or chivalrous spirits ; little gold
And little honour came from that rich West
So proudly vaunted once ; the Admiral's sons

Were taunted in the streets with his vain boasts,
His sad and failing fortunes. Isabella,
For ever thwarted by the niggard care
And cold reluctance of her officers,
From her own coffers gave with liberal hand
To stay the colony's most pressing needs,
Both ships and stores ; and sorrowing in her heart
Over her gentle Indians and their fate,
Made for their welfare wise and generous laws
For general order in the mines and fields,
The commerce and the dealings with the state.

Official zeal and jealousies and craft
With harsh contentions filled the Admiral's life,
Deep weariness fell upon him, he resolved
To strive no longer, but commit his schemes
Of fresh discovery to Bartholomew,
And make a home with his two sons, and rest.
But heavy griefs had come upon the queen,
Her cup of sorrow had been filled as full
And of as bitter waters as are drunk
By any lowliest mother : her one son,
Not yet a twelvemonth's bridegroom, the first heir
Of those once separate kingdoms now combined
Into one nation—Spain, also first heir
Of the magnificent West—passed from his bride,

His mother's arms, his great inheritance ;
Not royal hopes nor happy youthful love
Could stay his footsteps from their early grave :
Her daughter Joan, unloved in wedlock bands,
Of wavering intellect, grew darker still
And wandered farther into the sad land
Of dulled intelligence : the youthful bride
Of Portugal, her daughter best beloved,
Bore a fair son and died. In such sad days
Columbus had no heart to leave his queen
And her loved service, but in lonely thought,
And ever brooding on his many schemes,
Imagined that some wonderful new success
Might rouse and stir her fancy, and avail
Her heavy sorrows somewhat to beguile ;
And he obtained her leave to sail again
For his great continent Cuba, there to found
Fresh colonies, and on his outward way
Seek out a wonderful country of rich gems
Near the equator, told of by Ferrér,
A learned lapidary skilled in gems.

Before he sailed he ordered his affairs :
For his two sons he had no care, the queen
Said, " They have been good servants to my son
And were beloved by him, give them to me,

And I will have them ever near myself."
She took Fernando for her page, Diego
She raised to a more honourable post,
Making him Governor of all her house,
Where faithfully he served her till her death.
His cherished rights Columbus made secure
In Spain and in the Indies ; placed in trust
In Genoa, in Old St. George's Bank,
The documents of those rights ; monies to found
A family of his kin to carry on
His name where he was born, perpetually ;
And for the poor folk of his native town ;
Other large sums, to lie and make increase
For his great armament, when he should lead
A new Crusade, according to his vow.

When at last ships were found, pressed for his
service,

Slowly both crews and colonists came in,
And, by the saddest word he ever spoke,
Their insufficient numbers were filled up
By convicts from the galleys and the mines,
Half-pardoned, and bound over to fulfil
A certain term of work ; and thus he sailed,
Thus manned, thus served ; to the last hour pursued
By bitter jealousies and ungenerous strife.

Not without company of friends he went :
A kinsman of his own, Carlo Colombo,
His comrade of old days at Cordova,
Don Pedro de Arana, and besides
Sanchez de Carvajál, through many years
A loyal follower, a steadfast friend.

To Hayti's southern coast the Ozema flows,
And on its banks Bartholomew has raised,
As the two brothers formerly had planned,
A second Isabella, afterwards
As San Domingo known ; not distant far
From Hayna's rocky shores and new-found mines
Yielding abundant gold—and hither bound,
But by a widely sweeping southern course,
The Admiral departed on his voyage.
Past Herro, leeward of the Cape de Verdes,
On unknown seas and by an unknown track
He came through heavier airs into the calms
That burn along the Equator ; deadly calms
Sultry and suffocating ; sultry fogs,
Death-dealing sunshine, fever and despair ;
And never found the island rich in gems.
Making slow way out of those dreadful calms,
To north and north-west steering, they beheld
Three shining pointed summits of an island rise

Before them on the horizon ; drawing near
And seeing those three lofty points were one,
Joined at their base, in solemn joy Columbus
Christened the isle La Santa Trinidad—
A land of woods and streams—Upon their left
The rough coasts of the southern continent rose.
By strong west winds, and by strong currents driven
Along the tossing ever-troubled Straits,
They swept into a wide and peaceful sea,
The Gulf of Paria, whose encircling shores
Lay on the westward far beyond their sight,
And still Columbus thought what lands he saw
Were also islands, though around the ships
At times wide tracts of freshest water lay,
Such as flow out and float upon the sea
Only from rivers of great continents.
In those calm waters, by those peaceful shores,
They lingered many a day in needful rest ;
Then through the Dragon's Mouth, another strait
Of rocks and rushing waters, westward bore
Along the coast of Pearls.

Here far ahead

They saw great mountains and continuous land :
At this Columbus wondered, and there flashed
Into his mind the strange exciting thought,

“Is this still Asia? Those the Cuban coasts
Sweeping and curving down from Ornofay?
And those fresh waters floating on the salt,
Are they a great abundance flowing out
From ancient Ganges? Then the passage lies
Here by the Indian Continent! But here
Even in the sight of yonder shining hills
Which guard perhaps the ocean-way of kings,
This quest I must forego. Our stores fail fast,
My seamen overtasked can bear no more,
Shrunk by the sun, my ships at every strain
Threaten to fill and sink, and for myself,
Not only does my strength fail, but my sight,
Darkened and painful, fails me day by day.
We must yield once again, and turn our ships
To our own Hayti, and the Ozema's mouth
Where the new city stands.” Northward he turned,
And after many weary days they neared,
As the sun sank, their island's rocky coast.
The misty hills, the shining mountain peaks,
Solemn and still in the still sky—as thoughts
Of death, and man's undying life beyond,
Shine on him in his dark and barren hours—
There ever if he lift his eyes to see.

CANTO XI.

RETURN TO SPAIN IN CHAINS—FOURTH VOYAGE.

ARRIVED at San Domingo, the new city
Built by Bartholomew on the river-side,
Dark was the tale the Admiral heard from him—
How rapine, turbulence, bloodshed filled the land,
How friend and foe were treacherous alike ;
And how Roldán the Chief Judge of the island
Was also chief of insolence and revolt,
And in malignant slanders of the brothers.

Two years the darkness deepened, and the storm
Burst on Columbus. By his own demand
A royal envoy had been sent from Spain
To judge between his accusers and himself,
Search out the truth and send his witness home.
For this high office Ferdinand has chosen
Francis de Bobadilla—an hidalgo,
And soldier in the service of the Church,

High in the royal household. But when first
To Hayti come, he entered on his post,
The Admiral was up the country north,
The Adelantado on the western coast.

Thus the new envoy, vain and credulous,
By flatterers guided and designing men,
Did so misread the very facts he saw,
The solemn trust he held, that he condemned
The Viceroy in his absence without trial,
Proclaimed himself as Viceroy in his place,
In all things superseded him, seized his house,
Public and private papers, jewels, plate.
Boldly he was opposed by Don Diego,
Who held at San Domingo full command
During his brother's absence, Miguel Diaz
The Alcalde there, also Rodrigo Pérez,
The Admiral's lieutenant, and some few
Who still maintained their loyalty unstained,
But he had royal mandates signed and sealed,
Sent with him secretly by Ferdinand,
And of the colonists the greater part
Sided with his large company from Spain,
And so upheld him that he did not fear
To summon both the brothers, even Columbus,
Haughtily to his presence, as deprived

Already of the rights of men accused,
Though not as yet convicted. Don Diego
He had displaced already, and imprisoned.

The Admiral was in the Royal Vega
At Fort Conception, in the very midst
Of all the gracious beauty of the vale,
Where after long disturbances he sought
To bring out peace and law from war's misrule—
When, like the shivering wind before a storm,
Strange rumours reached him of the envoy's coming

And of his violent acts. Though well convinced
That by no royal sanction these were done,
But troubled to the heart, he left the Fort,
Came over the high mountains on the south
And waited at Bonao in the plain
Of Hayna and the gold mines. Here few weeks
Had passed, when suddenly, unannounced
Even to the Admiral, in the town appeared
A royal herald, making proclamation
That Bobadilla was appointed viceroy.
Bewildered, anxious, still Columbus wrote
A gracious welcome to him, and announced
His own departure in few weeks for Spain ;
And that before his leaving, he would give

Such full account as courtesy might claim
Of his transactions, making all things clear
To the new-comer. He awaited still
His customary letters from the crowns,
Of friendship, or the business of the State,
And some direct announcement of their mind—
When he received the envoy's insolent message,
By royal signature authorised as it seemed,
Summoning him to appear without delay.
Astonishment and deep perplexity
Possessed his mind, but as his constant wont
He nor delayed nor questioned the queen's will.

On horseback he set forth, but lightly armed,
With a few followers lightly armed likewise,
Forded the Hayna, and through wooded plains
And fertile lands rode on for many a mile
Before he gained the Ozema's wider stream,
And pressing hard, through the rich country came
In sight of San Domingo. Then he paused,
And bade his people, that he might not seem
Defiant or resisting, to keep back
And follow at some distance whilst he rode
Alone into the town. Upon his way
He met no welcome, no accustomed honour;
Glanced coldly at as if in fear or scorn

And followed by a quickly gathering crowd
Mocking and cursing him, he passed along
Into the central place. Here he was met
By Bobadilla's people, bade dismount,
And brought on foot into the envoy's house,
Which was his own house and state residence,
And in a lower chamber placed in guard.
He waited long expectant, but none came
To bring him to his judge, and whilst fresh doubt
And anxious wonder grew, there entered in
Some officers of the guard, one carrying chains,
Who in a hurried and unsteady voice
Announced to him the envoy's strict commands
That he should wear those fetters. Then the Ad-
miral

Rose silently and waited ; not a line
Of his strong features trembled, his bronzed face
Grew very pale and set, and to his eyes
Came the last look of one who hears his doom.
So he stood sternly ready, but delay
Arose unlooked-for ; in the officer's hands
The shackles hung, and none would put them on.
The sacredness of his office, his great name,
The memory of his many merciful deeds,
The silent dignity in which he stood,

Held back even common men ; a cold proud smile
Just stirred his lip, to see all stand aside
With downcast eyes of shame, perhaps of fear.
Questions were whispering asked, instructions
given,

Some went and came, and then at last stepped forth
One of his lowest servants, and for hire
The mean hands did the executioner's work,
And he stood shackled both on wrists and feet.
Then De Villejo entering with a guard
To take him forth, to him Columbus said ;
“ I see now there is nothing left but death,
Villejo, do you take me to my death ?
Answer me truly on your Christian faith.”
And De Villejo answered : “ On my soul,
Not to your death, sir, but on board the ship
That carries you to Spain ; and from my heart
I pray you to forgive me of your grace
That sworn obedience forces me to this.”
And so they went on board. Meantime Bartholo-
mew,

Advised so by his brother, came like him
Alone to San Domingo, and like fate
Met him on his arrival—neither saw
Nor ever met their churlish, flippant judge,

But with Diego were placed separately
And each in chains, on board the caravels
That were to take them instantly to Spain,
Not to be judged, but to receive at once
A punishment pre-ordained ; and thus they sailed.

The officer who had in special charge
The Admiral himself, was De Villejo,
A nobleman of a most noble mind,
Who was sore shamed to see Columbus thus,
And to his captive ever bore himself
With all the courtesy and observance due
To his vice-regal office ; with such reverence
As a pure lofty spirit and faithful life
Inspire in noble natures ; oft he prayed
That those unworthy chains Columbus wore
Be stricken off, but he replied : “ Not here,
They have been locked upon me in the name
Of the two sovereigns, in their name alone
Shall they be stricken off. I cannot tell,
Villejo, but I feel it in my heart
This is not really done by the queen’s wish,
But since it bears the seeming of her will
It shall remain so till she speak herself.”
Andreas Martin, captain of the ship,
Revered him with like fervour and bestowed

All the kind cares he could, and all the ease
Imprisonment allowed.

The voyage was made
Quickly and in fair weather straight to Cadiz,
And it fell out about that very time
That seamen coming into Palos, heard
Some rumour that three vessels from the west
Were bringing back, the Admiral in chains.
This news they told to Pérez, the good prior,
Who straightway went to Cadiz, and thence wrote
A letter to De Deza. First he spoke
Of the black slanders and the fatal choice
Made by King Ferdinand of a deputy,
Then further said: "The mournful tale is true
I wrote to you from Palos a week back.
The Admiral is here chained like a felon,
And I have seen him. Some long years ago
Alonzo de Villejo was my friend,
And he and Andreas Martin gave me leave
As a priest coming to confess and shrive,
At once to see Columbus, for that day
Would the Alcaldé take him to his house
Where he must wait instructions from the court.

"I went on board in melancholy haste,
And entering the cabin in the poop

Found him there sitting listless, with his head
Leaning against the wall, his eyes cast down,
His shackled hands hanging between his knees ;
And after we had silently embraced
He sat again so, and I, watching him,
Thought of a row of aloes by the sea,
Browned, beaten by the winter, their tall stems
That once bore stately coronals of flowers
Broken, discrowned. His brothers had come in
For the first time since leaving San Domingo,
And that had shaken him, shaken him nigh to tears,
But when he heard that the Alcaldé came,
The brave old man was strengthened into stone
And sat up cold and grim. Time after time
Had De Villejo prayed him earnestly,
And now almost upon his knees besought
That he would let his chains be taken off,
Columbus said, ' These fetters shame not me,
The king and queen shall see them.' And he rose
And said he waited the Alcaldé's pleasure
To go on shore.

Great was the shout that broke
From all the crowd, of anger and remorse
To see Don Christopher Columbus, Admiral,
Spain's once great hero, Isabella's friend,

A grey old man, come out upon the deck
Fettered and guarded ; and alike on shore
Anger and welcome, tears and shouting mixed ;
The guarding was but semblance, at his side
Villejo went bareheaded, the Alcaldé
Walked with a sorrowful and gentle mien,
Giving his prisoner honour, every cap
Was lowered to earth in silence as he passed.
And now all three at Cadiz under guard,
Such Bobadilla's orders, wait to hear
The pleasure of the sovereigns.
God grant that it be justice at the least
And such free trust as is but justice here !
And grace and honours worthy of a prince."

The court was at Granada, and the news
Flashed through the country of the shameful wrong
Done to the Admiral. The king and queen—
The king in politic conduct and the queen
In bitter indignation and distress—
Wrote instantly to order his release,
His honourable treatment and his brothers' ;
Sent ample sums of money for his needs
And all things to his station suitable ;
Beseeching him to come to court at once
With the best speed his weakened state allowed.

And then indeed his chains were stricken off—
But evermore until his dying day
Where'er he dwelt they hung upon the wall,
Full in his sight, their shadow on his soul—
And he arrayed himself in goodly garb
And set forth with his brothers for the court.

Come to Granada, in the Alhambra palace,
Beneath the fretted arches and the roofs
Gilded and painted, in a marble court
Where midst the laden orange-trees there sprang
And flashed the murmuring waters, once again
Before the royal pair Columbus stood.
Whom when the queen beheld haggard and old
Beyond the wont of threescore years and five,
His white hairs scanty, and his once quick step
Slow and considered, sudden to her eyes
Rushed the kind tears, and holding out her hands
She spoke some words of welcome, calling him
Her good and faithful servant. At this sight
His brave heart failed, and kneeling at her feet
He bowed his head and wept :
“ O queen, the great God bless you for your tears !
And that you do me justice in your heart.”
Then rising up, with outstretched hands spoke on :
“ Do I not need your tears ? What else is left

For me who come before you stripped of all
That was a pride or honour, like a palm
Stripped by the tempest of its leafy crown ?
I am a broken sword cast by in scorn ;
A guardian fortress sapped and overthrown ;
A nation's banner dragged through dust and mire !
Scoffed at by Christendom for a baffled fool ;
Cursed as oppressor of my cherished land
Now orphaned of me, and the tyrant's prey !
With such a signal baseness as the intent
To sell your New World to some other Lord,
I stand accused, who not so much as paused
In the most inner secret of my soul
To see it possible and scorn the thought ;
And in the sight of all my enemies
Seem even by you condemned. Yes ! in these
 weeks

A fiery flood has rolled across my life,
Leaving it grey with ashes, and alone
Can trust from one like you, trust from your heart,
Bring to me any healing." His voice shook,
And she with womanly and queenly words
Bade him take comfort and rest confident
He should be justified before the world,
And should receive his rights and honours back,

And with redoubled honour. So she thought,
But as the months went by delays were made.
The unjust Bobadilla was recalled,
And Nicholas de Ovando took his place,
With full authority and powers endowed
To disentangle all the right from wrong,
To judge, to fulfil judgment, and to rule
A two years' space ; and then, misdoers punished,
The regular order of the law established,
The Admiral's enemies silenced and exiled,
And all the evil wrought him done away,
He should give way to him, and he return
To take again his own and lofty place
In peace and perfect honour. So went forth
Ovando in great state, even as a prince,
Largely attended, splendidly attired ;
His numerous fleet, not less than thirty sail,
Munificently furnished as became
The representative of the sovereign power.

For many months Columbus waited on
After the sailing of Ovando's fleet,
In idleness at Granada ; many a time
Did he recall his former heartfelt vows
To take from Infidels the Holy Land
And make good Christians of all heathen folk ;

And often in the evening with his sons,
Relating stories of the old crusades,
He made new plans again, and vowed new vows
As if youth lay before him endless, bright—
But never came a time to keep those vows.
Meanwhile the very air seemed thronged with tales
Of new discoveries—of how Pinzón
The younger, coasting down Brazil, was first
To cross the equator in those western seas,
And found the mighty river Amazon ;
How Niño of Moguér, Diego Lepe
Of the same place, Bastides of Seville,
And De Ojeda—severally explored
New ways and shores beyond the Parian Gulf ;
Of how Sebastian Cabot, following out
The great thoughts of Columbus, took his way
To find a north-west passage ; failed therein,
And came down many hundred leagues to Florida
By shores unguessed at. Wondrous more than all,
Vasco de Gama's voyage, who boldly cleared
The Cape of Storms, and won the Indian seas
For John of Portugal—and by like boldness
Did Pedro de Cabrál for King John also
Secure the two Brazils. News of these things
Whilst he did nothing, struck him to the heart

And his quick spirit neither quenched nor dulled,
Yet something softened by forced idleness
And weakness of his frame, would fall at times
Into the former youthful trick of verse,
But neither youthful now nor light the strain :

Shall I despair because the chills of age
Threaten the fruit yet hanging on the tree,
And with the winds of adverse fate engage

To shake it down ere its maturity ?
Because despite and envy bar the way
That I was called to from my infancy ?

Shall I despair ? and by consent betray
The cause that I have lived for ? for base fear
Is colleague to ill-fortune, and the day

That I accept it brings the other near
And I assist to my own overthrow.
I to whom sacred prophecy was clear !

Who chosen, neither hope, nor trust, but know !
Shall I have little faith ? Yet long delay
Lowers me to common weakness, and this show

Of final failure ; gladly would I lay
My head to rest, my weary bones to claim
The kind and quiet process of decay.

Yet who would then go forward in the name
Of Spain and the Lord Christ ? Lord, here I
stand
Ready for every service. What if fame

That was my due forsake me ? That the land
I found and cherished is rent from me ? Thou
Some other charge or duty wilt command,

Wilt use me where thou needest me, and how ;
Till to dropped eyelids and relaxing hand,
Time for the night's long rest thou wilt allow.

As time went by, his passionate longing grew
To sail forth as of old, and evermore
The vision haunted him of an opening way
Amidst those western mountains—a broad way
Of deep and level waters—on each hand
High terraced cliffs straight running on for leagues,
Solemn and mighty, silent as the sky ;
Along whose waters galleons richly stored,

Or royal fleets in proud procession formed,
Swept by in easy grandeur on their way.
Nearer the western sea the solemn cliffs
Widened away, and softly lowered down
To sunny slopes and stately sweeping swards,
And lakes where gilded barges proudly moved,
Where palaces rose large amidst the trees,
Gold-roofed and marble-fronted, and arcades
Of clustering columns, floors mosaic paved,
Led to some bowery city's domes and squares ;
Where everywhere thronged bright inhabitants,
Whose feasts and music, cheerful festivals,
Priests and processions, filled the shining days—
And brought to the true Christ would make his Cross
The centre of their stately life, each town
A new Jerusalem, a Heavenly Bride.
The mighty ocean widening from those straits
Would be, he thought, an ever sunny calm,
The wild Atlantic's ceaseless storms unknown.

So longing and so dreaming, the time came
When with Bartholomew and his youngest son
On this great quest the sovereigns sent him forth,
Bidding him God-speed in all friendliness ;
And kind the farewell Isabella wrote
In those last words he ever had from her.

One hundred men and fifty in his ships,—
His ships four caravels—Columbus sailed
To seek a new route to the Eastern lands.
But being driven far northward from his course,
Foreseeing heavy weather, his own ship
Slowly-sailing, leaky, scarce indeed sea-worthy,
He steered for San Domingo, there to wait
In safety, and procure a better ship
In place of the old caravel. Drawing nigh
The mouth of the Ozema, he beheld
Lying upon the stream a numerous fleet
Ready to sail for Spain. It carried back
His own worst enemies, a lawless crowd
Of profligate idlers dangerous to the State ;
Their leader Bobadilla, superseded
Now by Ovando ; Guarionex of the Vega,
The last chief left of all the native chiefs ;
A heavy freight of treasure and of gold
Extorted for the sovereigns, or amassed
By Bobadilla for his private use ;
Also the Admiral's treasure, stored for him
By his own officer De Carvajál.

Columbus anchoring in the river's mouth
Made haste to send on shore as messenger,

One of his captains, to demand in form,
Besides a good ship to replace his own,
Leave from the governor publicly announced
To come at once for shelter into port,
For he perceived the signs of coming change
And very terrible tempests. But Ovando—
Perchance foreseeing mischief, for the town
Yet held a number of the Admiral's foes
Who had been subjected on his account
To severe penalties—refused him leave
To come into the port, or to remain
At anchor in the river, or to change
His poor ship for a good one, and despatched
His answer by an officer of his guard.
Columbus read the letter, a dark flush
Rose to his brow, and with set lips he paused
A little ere he spoke : “ Most worthy sir,
I pray you, tell my lord the governor
That I accept his message, and will take
My ships to imminent death. Then further say,
Though calm the sea and cloudless are the skies,
That I have a long knowledge of these coasts
And all their weather signs, and all foretell
That ere two days be past such hurricanes

As my lord governor has never seen,
As have not visited this coast for years,
Will come upon us, and I pray my lord,
I earnestly beseech him for Christ's sake,
That he will stay the sailing of the fleet,
And not endanger all the many lives
On board those ships, nor the good ships themselves,
But wait in safety till the storms be past."

Calm were the seas and calm the radiant skies,
And none would take heed to his warning words,
And whilst his crew muttered, "Ill luck is ours,
With this man for a leader ! Not received
Here where he once was viceroy, turned away
In face of threatening gales, refused a ship
Perchance to save his life !" he with firm voice
Bid hoist the sails and heave the anchors up,
And with calm countenance watched his prows
turn round

In sight of all that fleet, and of the town
Bartholomew had raised, and took his course
Westward, to seek such safety as they might
By sheltering cliff or inward sloping bay.

Next day the thirty ships went out of port,
Slow going in the dead and breathless air
A day, a night, and half a second day ;

Then whilst Ovando triumphed in the calm,
The moaning sea was rising black and grim,
Heavy and hot the slow-collecting clouds
Spread round the horizon, on the distant waves
The white spray leaped, all round the thunder
 rolled,

And long before they reached the eastward cliffs
The hurricane broke upon them : wind and rain,
Lightning and thunder, and a mountainous sea
Continual changing with the veering storm
And the contending currents. On the shore
There was like fortune. Furious in the east
And furious in the west great gales arose
And rolled the towering masses of torn cloud
In darkness on the town ; the houses shook
As with an earthquake, and the frightened crowd
Looked for some unknown terror yet to come.
In the wide country round, these tropical gales
Were not less fearful, tearing mightiest trees
Up by the roots, bending the lofty palms
Like rushes to the ground, whirling in air
The huts and sugar-canes, and bringing down
Whole cliffs with woods upon them to the plain.
The waters were swept inland for many miles,
Tossing the anchored vessels to and fro,

Far from their moorings, till they went asunder
And the drowned sailors floated in the midst ;
Many the dead that lay upon the land.

For many days the winds and waters raged,
And when at last the sunny calms returned,
The half-wrecked town with awe-struck terror saw
Some three or four dismantled hulks drift in
To tell their dreadful tale. That ship that took
The Admiral's gold was saved, and had pursued
Her destined way to Spain ; the rest were lost,
Were sunk in the unfathomable depths,
And broken spars and useless wreck alone
Floated, and strewed the heaving sea for miles.

Meanwhile Columbus and his caravels,
Driven from the port, pursued their dangerous way
Along the coast to westward ; by the skill
Of their good captains weathered out the storm,
And found in Port Hermoso some repose ;
Repaired their sea-beat ships, and when the winds
Came freshening from the north spread all their
sails

And stretched out boldly on the unknown seas.
Two hundred leagues they sailed, and saw new
land

Before the summer closed, the Isle of Pines,

The long and fertile coast Honduras called,
A coast of frequent storms. Then went their way
Past reedy rivers, capes, and land-locked bays,
Savannas, solemn mountains, spreading woods
Whose vaulted trees to lofty dimness rose,
Or made a paradise of scent and bloom,
As softly wild as wonderful as dreams ;
Inhabited by many a goodly folk—
Ever more south for countless, countless leagues.
Along this coast it was the wanderers met
A canopied canoe from Yucatan,
Whose hundred passengers had long tales to tell
Of rich and civilised countries in the west ;
Here too they heard of spices, pearls, and gold,
And of Veragua, whose wild rocks and hills,
And palmy plains rich in all corn and fruits,
Also in these abounded. Now arose
From the ships' companies a passionate prayer
Here to make pause, to rest from ocean strife
And tasks severe, and while the moment served
Seize on these natural treasures. But their chief
Had no part in these longings, and turned east,
Leading his ships reluctant by the ridge
Of mountainous rock that feels on either side
The tides of both the world's great oceans beat ;

Where, had he paused and climbed its woody heights
God had revealed the mystery that he sought,
And to his unsealed eyes had been laid bare
The secret of the Continents and the West :

Slow pressing forward, they were sore beset
By the small enemy so terrible,
That bores its secret tunnels in the planks
And eats the heart of stoutest pine or oak.
Here tropical fogs in huge, soft columns piled,
Advancing like swift ghosts, obscured their way ;
By more tremendous storms than ever yet
Captains or crews had known they were assailed :
Shrieking and crashing, till the mariners
Shook as at terrors of the Judgment Day,
And wept and prayed and mourned their many sins,
Confessing each to each. Upon his bed,
Sick and sore racked with pain, the Admiral lay,
Sheltered upon the stern, where he might still
Control the navigation and keep rule.

The vessels strained and laboured, mountainous
waves

Frequent broke over them ; and not alone
Did the dense fogs in giant masses piled,
The thunderstorms, the windy hurricanes,
Make the sky awful, but like evil spirits

Came the down-hanging waterspouts that drew
The ocean up to them in twisted heaps,
Whirling about ungoverned till they burst
In dangerous turbulence, all created things
Seeming their natural order to forsake.
And they were haunted by white-bellied sharks
Hungry and grim ; great sea-birds swept around,
Loud screaming for their prey. And so the days
Ran on to weeks in danger and distress.

Fair weather came at last, and the fleet lay
At anchor in the shade of westward cliffs
Where palms stood black against a fiery sky,
Deepening to violet as the sun went down ;
And the large stars shone out in heaven above
And in the deep, dark waters of the creek.
Here on his vessel's poop the Admiral sat
Weary beside his brother, who had been
In all that voyage as ever a sure friend,
In grief and danger, both by sea and land,
In sickness and in sorrow gentle, kind,
Truly in all things as his stronger self.
Against his uncle's shoulder leaned Fernando,
A slender lad, of laughing, loving eyes,
And curls of clustering brown that rested now
Upon a thin, wan cheek. Columbus then :

“ Bartholomew, behold, the fortieth day
Now closes on us since we left behind
Veragua’s promised wealth ; my eager search
Is baffled still, and I am very sad
And troubled for thee, brother, who hast come
Against thy will upon this dangerous voyage
On my behalf ; for thee and for Fernando,
My good heroic boy, so causeless brought
Into such dreary straits, and his young life
Imperilled for my sake ; and for my son
Who waits for us in Spain—the troubled days
Which lie before him if my end should come,
Leaving my great and difficult affairs
Unsettled in his hands.

My men’s complaints,
Our captains’ urgency, thy frequent prayers
That I would spare them, nor in our frail ships
Wage further war against the elements,
I own are just ; but here where we might rest
In safety, and repair our leaky ships
For further search along this endless coast,
Our men’s wild, lawless conduct has made foes
Of the kind Indian people, and these shores
Are safe for us no more. Brother, God’s hand
Is visibly against me for this time,

All that remains for us is to turn back
And seek to carry out my lesser plan,
To found another colony ; and no place
Will suit so well as rich Veragua's coast."

"For this time, brother, but when thou hast built
Thy town, and all is ordered, thou and I
Will sail again successful on this quest."

"We shall, Bartholomew, and when I found
Another settlement I will keep it well,
Clean from the sins and sorrows of the old,
In the first freshness of its joy and love
Offered as a sin-offering for the blood
And tears of Hispaniola. For my search
No doubts disturb me, I shall yet return
And find the western passage, and at last
The time will come to lead my great Crusade
And thus fulfil my life. But now I think
Of our return voyage west."

"Aye, Christopher,

And seek thy rest now, leave the ships to me,
We will be ready to go west at dawn."
The Admiral in his cabin laid him down,
And cheerfully Bartholomew gave command
That on the morrow they should quit the creek
And shape their course to westward and south-west.

Veragua's land of promise, her rich plains,
Her gold-abounding rocks, the Spaniards reached
Just as the New Year opened, and essayed
To raise their settlement. But all things failed
Upon that fatal coast, except the faith
Of those few ready, lion-hearted men,
Who stood fast by Columbus to the death.
Late in the spring the shattered company
Left that sad coast, to make the speediest way
Yet possible for shelter and new ships
To San Domingo, even yet to lose
Another caravel, so pierced by worms
That all her timbers failed, and she went down ;
And in their two small vessels they pursued
Their lonely way, struggling against head winds
And currents contrary, and failing hope.

In San Domingo some two years had passed
Since the great storm—and from his palace gates
The governor was riding forth in state,
When he was stayed to listen to the tale
Of two worn seafarers just come to shore.
Diego Mendez and Fiesco these,
Two of the bravest of the Admiral's friends,
Two of the best of his ships' companies,
Who scarce with trembling limbs could go or stand,

And scarce with hoarse and hollow voice could
speak.

They told that from Jamaica they had come,
And there had left the Admiral aground
Upon the rocks by Port San Gloria,
In the two worm-pierced ships the sea had spared.
These they had lashed together side by side,
Just foundering, full of water to the decks,
Run them aground, and built on prow and poop
Thatched huts, the only shelter possible
In their forlorn sad plight ; the islanders
Being turned against them by the greediness
And tyranny of the baser of the crews,
Numbers of whom forsook the Admiral
And wandered wild and lawless on the land.
Of these the basest were the brothers Porras,
Unscrupulous leaders of conspiracy,
Who openly attacked him when he lay
Crippled and helpless on his bed, his life
Twice by Bartholomew rescued from their hands ;
And for his sake had these adventurers
In two canoes by a few Indians manned,
Come fifty leagues in famine, heat, and thirst,
In risks from storms, the treachery of their men,
And the conflicting currents of the sea,

To ask for speedy aid.

Ovando heard,
But doubting of their tale, sent secretly
Spies to discover what the truth might be,
Who soon returned and made the sad truth known.
Yet still a year's delay the governor made
Before he sent them help ; before Columbus
And the poor perishing remnant of his crews
Were fed and clothed, and brought to San Domingo.
Five weeks they were at sea, and when they stood
Before Ovando, gaunt and hollow-eyed,
Scarcely like living creatures, there was first
A silence of great horror, then a cry
From all who saw, of pity and remorse.
For their heroic leader, ever just
And ever kind, the old love was rekindled,
And the old reverence, and loud acclaim
Of hearty welcome rang, and tears were shed.
But the two brothers Porras, brought in chains
As prisoners, taken red-handed in revolt
And ready for all murderous extremes,
Were by Ovando's own command released,
And suffered to return, free, unaccused,
To plead their cause in Spain : while to the Admiral
All right to sue or judge them was denied,

Before departing on his homeward voyage
Columbus travelled on the northern coasts,
And riding up the Pass of the Hidalgos
Paused when he reached its heights, to look once
more

Across the Royal Vega. Long he gazed
Up the silent, desolated land,
Nor knew it the last time ; his inmost heart
Ached as it had not ached for his own wrongs
Bitter and deep, his seeming wasted life :
But for his island and its terrible doom
Each year more terrible. There was not a crime
Which that strange thirst for gold which makes
men mad

Madder the more they quench it, and the fire
Of loose unbridled power, arouse in men,
But on the innocent people had brought down
The fate of evil beasts. Not yet ten years
Since first Columbus touched their kindly shores,
And scarcely a seventh part of the Indians lived :
The strong had struggled bravely and were slain,
The weak were overborne, and grieved and died ;
The Royal Vega, that wide Paradise,
Had run with innocent blood, and by her streams
Her mild and slender children had dropped dead

Beneath their heavy and unwonted toils,
Like animals struck down by pestilence,
Like blossoms falling in a strong east wind ;
Many had slain themselves and all their house,
Rather than live beneath the white man's rule.
And with this burden aching at his heart
Columbus with his brother and his son,
Took ship once more for Spain.

CANTO XII.

RETURN TO SPAIN, AND DEATH.

IT was a sad, disastrous voyage that brought
The adventurers back to Europe, and Columbus
Came into Santo Lucar stricken down
With pain and fever. By his brother's care
Being carried in a litter from the ship,
He raised his head, and looking back at her
Said to his son Fernando with a smile :
“ We are much alike, the good old barque and I,
Neither sea-worthy, but I think that I
Have the most life left, and when once at Seville
I shall rest well and get my strength again.”
But those who watched him saw the tide had turned
To ebb away, and not to flow again.
When he arrived at Seville, burning pains
Kept him a helpless prisoner ; his affairs,
Through great neglect and wilful treachery,
Were much disordered, and though ample wealth

Lay due to him in Hayti and in Spain,
So little reached him that by borrowed aid
His household was maintained. His eldest son
Was at Medina Campo with the queen
Who lay there sick to death. Not knowing this,
Columbus trusted still that her firm hand
And faithful soul would gain and guard his rights
Against his many enemies and the king ;
He urged in frequent letters his own claims,
Pictured the sorrowful, distracted state
Of Hispaniola, where the golden ores
Owned by the crown lay useless and unwatched ;
As instantly he urged his seamen's rights,
Praying quick payment of the wages due
For their hard services—though he knew well
How most of them had been his active foes,
And some were ready still to work him harm.
“ They are poor,” he said ; “ for three years they
have toiled
In storms and dangers far away from home,
And they bring back good news that well deserves
Justice and thanks at least, if not reward
Beyond mere bargained payment.” In reply
To all his urgency no comfort came
And no assurance that his words were read.

The vessel bringing Porras and his brother
Had landed them by Sagres, and on this
Columbus was resolved to seek the court
That he might speak himself in his defence,
For all his papers had been lost at sea.
The winter cold was great, but at the door
His litter was prepared, and he arose
Fain to go down the long, uneasy stair
And go out into the bitter, piercing wind ;
But his strength failed, his sufferings were too sore,
He lay back trembling in his fevered limbs,
And said : “ I see now I am old indeed,
And little time is left me to secure
My rank and privileges ; even now
I fear I may not cross the seas again,
Nor—if the sovereigns grant my office back
And make me once more Viceroy in the West—
Have the strength left to rule there ; but my son,
But my dear son, would take my lofty place
And all my other rights, and at thy side,
My good Bartholomew, would all go well
For him and the new kingdoms, therefore still
I must work hard to win back all my rights.”
Fernando then : “ O father, take good heart !
My uncle will to court and say for you

All that you would have said, and he can speak
Those things about yourself you cannot say.”
“ Not yet,” replied the Admiral, “ I will write
A letter to the queen. Patience till then—”
And knew not that she was already dead.
Those mournful tidings reached him as he sat
In some returning brightness of the sun,
One day at noon, when came Fernando in,
Bringing a letter from the Lady Joan
Wherein she told him that the suffering queen
Had closed her eyes in death. “ Alas !” he said,
Trembling all over, and his lips all white,
“ So great a loss the world has never known !
Prayers must we make for her, for her soul’s rest,
Yet can we doubt not of her blessed estate,
So good, so holy ever ; God has sure
At once received her to her place in Heaven.
Prayers also for the king, to him this blow
Is great and heavy ; grand their lot has been
And never sovereign had a nobler spouse,
And never husband a more tender wife,
And never man or woman had a friend
More than she was to me.” Thus having spoke,
He sat with his bowed head between his hands
And mourned her loss through many heavy hours.

She had to him so represented heaven,
Had been such absolute goodness in herself,
So fed his soul's needs like a sacrament,
That at the first his staggering thoughts seemed
lost

And loosened his fast hold on heavenly things ;
She had been also such a faithful friend,
So just, so kind, so thoughtful of his weel—
His darkened life grew darker, even the walls
Became more bare and dark, as in a room
Whose tapestries are rudely torn away ;
But with the memory of her many griefs
An old man's tardy tears came to his eyes,
And in a broken voice he uttered thanks
“ That she was taken to her perfect rest
Out of the troubles of this weary world.”

Good friends about the court Columbus had—
Of whom Vespucci was among the best,
Faithful and brave ; De Deza was another,
Archbishop now of Seville, a firm friend
From Salamanca in old times till now ;
De Carvajál who long had loved him well
And laboured for him ; with Diego Mendez
One of the most unwearied, tried and true ;
Also Geronimo, who knew as they

The truth about Columbus. To these came
Bartholomew, and they together worked
For justice to his brother. With the spring
Came healing warmth, and through the old man's
frame

Life ran a fresher course, and he arose
And travelled to Segovia to the court.
Here amidst warmest welcome from his friends,
And much of outward honours and regard
From the great personages round the king,
What soothed him most, what he the most esteemed,
Was the respect and love even of Ximenes
The austere lofty prelate, stern and bold,
Noble and pure of life, and who was now
Grand Cardinal of Spain.

The cautious king

Gave to his urgent and repeated prayers
At last a private hearing, when he told
The story of his voyage and the gold mines
In the new land Veragua ; Ferdinand
Heard him with inward joy, and lacked in naught
Of outward courtesy, but on his brow
Truth was not, nor a kind gleam in his eyes,
And with a cold displeasure he enquired
Why had the Admiral not remained to work

Those teeming mines and bring their treasures
home.

Columbus in his heart longed for the queen,
Her reassuring presence, her kind voice,
But silenced his sad memories and spoke,
Explaining all those matters once again,
And then his tremulous voice went harsh and
strange,

The old fire kindled in his eyes, his hand
Clenched and unclenched, and a faint red rose up
Into his faded cheek : “ I wrote, O king,
And told you of the sufferings of the land
We took to be our own ; I told you, sire,
Of those great crimes of brutal-minded force
Which have laid desolate the lovely isle
Of Hispaniola, and have made a Hell
Where was a Paradise ; drenching in blood
The peaceful vales, the sunny flowery plains ;
Leaving the echoes only of their names
Who dwelt there innocent, sincere, benign,
When first we Christians took them to our care ;
Have taught them murder, treachery, and hate,
Have made the white men’s race a mock and curse,
A name for all things cruel or unclean.
King, these great sins were needless ! never wealth

Out-poured as rivers of the virgin gold
Can compensate our deep blood-guiltiness,
Or give us back those wasted lives and love.
Let it be so no more, but these new fields
Of wealth and enterprise be clean of blood,
And we proud Christians carry in our lives
The evidence of Him whose name we bear.”
He paused, and Ferdinand slightly bowed his head,
And gently smiled and said, “ We hear you, sir,
We thank you for your zeal and services,
And we will bear your warning words in mind
When to Veragua we address ourselves ;
Meanwhile we will consider your demands
Regarding your possessions, and fulfil
All with the strictest justice.” This was all
The answer that he gave.

About that time

The court removed again, Valladolid
Being its usual seat, and settled there
The Admiral in writing urged his suit ;
With due formalities received again
Promise and courtesy from King Ferdinand ;
But many months of talk and argument
Wilfully lengthened, burned his life away,
And when the Queen Joanna and her spouse

From Flanders came to take her mother's throne,
And all the court went northward to the coast
To give them stately welcome, he remained
Powerless to rise or travel ; but Bartholomew
Went for him to do homage to the queen
And speak to her his brother's confident hope
Of perfect restitution at her hands
Of all his rights and offices again ;
And how, relieved of care, he should arise
As his old self, and carry out for her
All his great schemes as he had thought to do
For her good mother when he last returned
To Spain to find her dying. Thus he said,
But shortly on his brother's leaving him
He lay down on his bed to rise no more,
And thus wrote to him, " Brother, much I doubt
If ever I shall see thy face again,
But work thou all the more to win my rights
For my two sons ; my work and rights are done,
Darkly and overcast my sky brings in
The evening of my days ; I have toiled hard,
I have done great things, but no one gives me thanks
Or pays my promised wages ; I have sown,
Others will reap the harvest ; I have led
A forlorn hope, and others enter in

Over my fallen body ; be it so.
Faithful I bore the standard of the Lord
At his command, and having set it up
I wait his further pleasure ; if I die
My great works unaccomplished, and myself
Unjustified before the world, I go
To take my wages and my stars of honour
In his own kingdom, at his very feet ;
Yet strive thou for my sons, my rights are theirs."

His malady grew yet more virulent,
And like a field of ripened corn that lies
Dashed and down-beaten by tempestuous rain,
By his great agonies overpowered he lay ;
His brothers being busy at the court
His sons attended on him, and their love
Faithful and quick taught them such sick-bed cares
As gentle women use ; servants and friends
A few there were to wait upon his couch,
To speak good cheer, and watch with hearts intent
For every gentle faltering word he spoke,
Whenever his great sufferings gave him leave—
Chief amongst these Fiesco, who had made
That dangerous voyage with Mendez to implore
Help from Ovando, when Columbus lay
Shipwrecked and starving on Jamaica's rocks.

Again his malady grew more virulent,
And on Ascension Day all pain had ceased,
Whereon the leech announced that death was
near,

And bade him if he aught had on his mind
To settle it at once. There was no need
Now of formalities, and lying pale
Beneath the heavy curtains of his bed,
Amid the softened light cast through the room
From the great glow outside, for to the north
His windows opened ; whilst the pictured saints
Hanging upon the wall, his sword and cloak,
The long-linked chains he carried everywhere,
Faded from his dim sight—with tremulous lips
And frequent pause he told his chief desires
Over again, and once again besought
Diego, his dear son, ever to hold
Fernando, the young brother, near his heart :
“ Watch him, Diego, kindly, he is all
The brothers that thou hast, and, my good son,
For thee ten brothers were not half enough,
Naught is enough for thee ; but brothers’ love
Is the great good of all, then love each other
As I and your two uncles ever loved,
And served each other’s needs with ready hand.”

Then to Diego he went on to speak
His last instructions—masses to be said
For his own soul, his wife's, his parents' both,
In a new chapel that his son should build
Hereafter at Conception in the Vega,
In that dear land so wonderfully given
Into his hand by God ; and special charge
For the support and care of Beatrix,
Fernando's mother : “ Do this faithfully,
For heavy is my soul on her account,
My conscience sorely wounded.” And he named
Many small sums and duties that he owed
To any who had served him. Then he ceased,
And signified that now he would receive
The rites and comforts by the Church ordained
To help men to their end. Diego sent
To bring the priest and his solemnities,
And speedily the sacring-bell was heard
Below the window and upon the stairs,
And then there entered priest and white-robed choir
With lighted candles and the holy pyx,
Chalice, and cross, and consecrated oil.
Columbus made confession, and received
At the priest's hands remission of his sins,

The holy wafer, and with sacred oil
The mystic sign on brow, and breast, and feet ;
Then, after prayers and duly chanted psalms,
The priest and his array went out, and the old man
Lay still, and none were near but weeping friends
And the two brothers standing at his head.

“ Kiss me, my sons,” he said, and they obeyed
And kissed him on the cheeks. “ Kneel down,”
he said,

“ On either side the bed.” And they knelt down,
Each with his bowed face hidden in the sheets.

And with a hand upon the head of each
He blessed them and was silent ; none else spoke
And all the noises on the street were heard,
And the birds singing in the blossoming vines
About the window, and the distant bells
Ringing glad peals in honour of the Feast
Of the Ascension, sounding dreamily.

He spoke again : “ Into thy hands, O Lord,
I do commend my spirit,” and then lay
Breathing some moments more in scarce-drawn
breaths

That softly ceased. And so Columbus died,
Ending his long and laborious life in peace.

In later years, when to another's gaze
That mighty ocean lay revealed—from him
By Darien's hills and Panama's long range
Of seaboard mountains hidden—all men knew
That the Italian seaman had not found
The borders of an old, known continent
But of new countries ; and that his proud motto
Granted him by the sovereigns long ago,
In its majestic claim stood justified :

A Castilla y à Leon
Nuevo Mundo dió Colon.

More than he sought he had attained, for God
Gave to his patient courage, to his faith
Lofty and reasonable, such reward
As comes but once in history. Meanwhile he
Had gone on that long voyage that all men take,
And, without help or comrade, had again,
By unknown waters entered a New World.

THE END.

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